THE WORLD'S TRIUMPH

BY

LOUIS JAMES BLOCK

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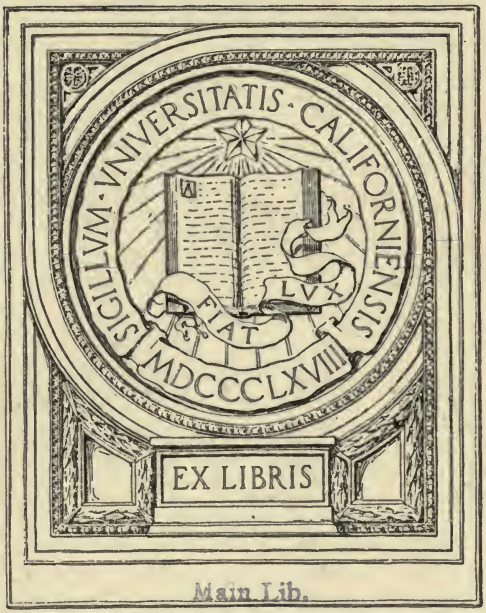

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Prof. George H. Smith
with best wishes
Apr 23 1909. Chicago
Louis Block

THE WORLD'S TRIUMPH

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The World's Triumph

A Play

PROLOGUE—FIVE ACTS—EPILOGUE

By

LOUIS JAMES BLOCK

To love and bear; to hope till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
This is alone, Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.
"Prometheus Unbound"—*Shelley*.

Philadelphia & London
J. B. Lippincott Company
1909

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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PROLOGUE

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CHARACTERS.

Mrs. Herbert, a widow.
Robert, her son.
Edith, elder daughter.
Edmund Heathcliffe, engaged to Edith.
Angela, youngest child.

The scene presents a drawing room in a large country house at Christmas. The time is the middle of the morning. In the centre at the back is a wide door opening on a hall with a view of the fine staircase. The fire-place shows a large and restless blaze.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

THE WORLD'S TRIUMPH

PROLOGUE.

MRS. HERBERT The guests are assembling in the village and the neighboring houses. My dear Robert, you know that I especially wish you to be present, and lend me your encouragement in this unusual venture. Indeed, I wrote the play, which we shall give here to-night, for you.

ANGELA We've been coaxing him with all our might, mamma, but he says that he must return to town this morning. We asked him for the reason, but he had none to give.

EDMUND Well, Rob, you are fairly caught, and you might as well throw off your indifference for the while, and enjoy the festivities of the season, just like the rest of us, who haven't gone as far on the road to Wisdom's abiding place as you seem to have done.

EDITH I don't believe there's a great deal of wisdom in caring so slightly for what other people esteem so highly. The many are as likely to be right as the one who holds himself aloof in his doubtful silence and solitude.

ROBERT Now, my sweet sister, you know pretty well that on most points I am entirely in agreement with Edmund and you, and you might let me have a small plot of ground in which I can rear some insignificant flowers, of which no one else has the seed, and which I can really call my own.

EDMUND But, Robert, they have so close a resemblance to flowers growing in many garden spaces that I really don't know how you can lay exclusive claim to them.

MRS. HERBERT You are altogether too hard on him; he left the city, where he had a number of pressing interests, and he is here to help me when I greatly need him.

ROBERT Why, mother, what is it that I can do? Your play and your music will be lovely. We are well aware of what charming surprises you are capable, and a woman on whose work has been set the seal of approbation from two continents cannot be altogether lost in uncertainty, even though her present undertaking be a wholly new one. A Christmas Play at the beginning of the Twentieth Century! and written by her whose famous assaults upon so many time-honored customs and immemorial institutions have made her name everywhere synonymous with freedom of an audacious kind! There is here something of an anomaly, is there not, mother dear?

EDITH Edmund, should you ever say as sharp a

word as that to me, I will punish you in the worst way I can imagine, even though a dozen clergymen have held their hands in blessing over us.

EDMUND You don't expect me to yield to utterances like that immediately; what I may have to do under the provocation of daily subjection, I am not able to tell.

MRS. HERBERT I never reveal the plot of my stories in the opening chapters; and I am hardly likely to unfold the centre of my mystery before it shows itself in its proper form. You will not find it a hard secret to unravel.

ROBERT (*Teasingly*) It's altogether a new departure, I foresee; I have observed the beginnings of it in your last books; we are receding from the positions taken in earlier years, and shall make amends for aggressions, which have brought a fame in whose light mingled some clouds of a needlessly dusky hue.

MRS. HERBERT (*Earnestly*) What if it indeed be so, my son? why should not a wider view of life bring with it a truer insight into its value and significance?

EDMUND (*Placing his hand upon Edith's shoulder*) Whatever these may be, I am certain that I have found them.

EDITH I will help you to make them clearer, and everybody shall learn from us whatever we discover.

ROBERT It's the same attempt, and, pardon me, mother, it's the same failure. The old questions re-arise in new forms, and we settle them in ways adapted to our present needs, and those who come after us find our answers wholly unsuited to the conditions in which they are placed. The childhood of mankind, it appears, will never come to an end; we still see hovering in the clouds before us wonderful visions of towered cities in which life is all golden, and in which we expect forever to dwell; we speed on the wings of our dreams into the streets of that lovely realm, and believe that we are its unquestioned denizens; we try to tear ourselves free from the bonds of the reality in which we are relentlessly grasped, and remain in the joy of our deception for periods of uncertain duration; the relapse, however, is inevitable, the return must be made, the darkness falls again, and the revulsion is the more painful in proportion to the sincerity with which the fruitless endeavor has been made.

ANGELA I wonder how much of all that I am supposed to understand. It has in it very little of the sound of Christmas carols or other music of this time of year.

MRS. HERBERT Perhaps the responses have not been as hopelessly variant as you would lead us to believe; their outer part and investiture have had, let us suppose, the wonder of nature's inexhaustible

difference, but the substance has been in its degree of fulness always the same. The oracles have replied from all the spheres and domains of existence; the birds in their irregular flights across the dappled blueness above them have written the story in letters mysterious and constantly effaced; the caves in rude mountain sides have spoken from the depths of the earth; the forests, swaying to the impulse of the mighty winds, have chanted in slow and solemn harmony the message, older than time and newer than hope; the deep heart of man, permeated by influences from the providence, in which he moves and is, has given forth the spirit of the destiny, which he ever more and more perceives and fulfils.

EDMUND Why do you so far forestall the music we are about to hear? This is an overture before the raising of the baton.

ANGELA It is more like the singing one wishes to hear when the Christmas bells are sounding. Are you going to tell him some of the stories that you make up for me when we are alone together? I would not do it, for he will not believe you, mamma; and I refused to repeat a single one of them, when he asked me, because I felt that he thought them not worth much to him.

ROBERT Heathcliffe, I shall be forced to request you to defend me against the attacks of my own family. On you at least I can depend.

EDITH He has passed beyond your mastery, and for the time at least is with the enemy, who use only very old-fashioned weapons, such as motherly love and others like unto it, but all rapidly becoming antiquated and out of date.

EDMUND Why, Edith, what makes it possible for you to be so bitter? In a moment I shall turn traitor, and present myself at the citadel opposite.

ROBERT The conflict between the new and the old spreads everywhere, and the sharpness, which belongs to the rising insight, evokes what strength remains in the view descending below the horizon and passing into the night. The sunset has its fierce burst of yellow and red resplendence as well as the sunrise, but both vanish in the white flame of disillusionment, which pours its colorless irradiation from the very zenith. Belief of any kind destroys the certainty of vision, and encircles the object with fictitious hues of its own making. All theories are equally true and equally dissolving and transitory. From prison house into prison house the soul of man fleets down the ages, and the destruction of one is but the upbuilding, equally vain, equally narrow, equally unreal, of another. The vase may have the perfection which the tenderest imagination can give, it may have the transparency of a viewless and weightless ether, it may have the restless glory

which belongs to the stars set in the serene and windless skies, but it is yet a limit and a confine, and the holy liquor of thought wells up against its sides in eagerness to over-leap and shatter. For the time the wise man declines unto such incarnation of his fetterless essence as seems to him conducive to ends desired by the many, and which ends, less self-destructive than others, they call goodness or the gods, but he knows the vision which he toils to express and enact is as vague and baseless as a thousand like or unlike it, which have outlived their brief hour and thrust themselves with haste and violence into the abyss that waits for all.

Mrs. Herbert These words, perhaps, partake of the haste and violence that are always the signs of an apprehension not free from the prejudgments which it condemns. The colorlessness of the summer's central skies is not an unmixed monotony of lifeless evanishment of all separate hues, but the wondrous unity in which the sunset and the sunrise conjoin in a nobler expression of both. The restlessness of life points infallibly to a rest, which the very dissatisfaction acknowledges to be superior to itself; the unhappiness, which sees nowhere that divine equipoise of thought and being which is its hidden cause, forever renews the search; from the shores of all the centuries the ships of hope have set sail across the darkling spiritual seas, and

the splendid continents of calm and fulfilment have always lured them onward with sun-kissed mists, lifting veil by veil, and revealing the fundamental freedom, which is both the first and the last of existence. In the heavens the past saw the perfection of united humanity as the potency from which everything had descended; the dreams of the modern world place the same harmony of all deeds and thoughts and loves in a future as rich and as fair; in the ever present fulness of truth in which we properly live, in the justly proportioned act whose reverberation from uttermost extremes is but a reduplication of itself, in the supreme joys of trust and sacrifice in which we find ourselves at home with all other men and with the Divine, the completion is found which knows not where nor when and forever ascends into infinite participations with itself. Not a prison house is the limited experience but a generous opportunity for the successive uplifting of hearts and minds above it, and the revelation of the noblest deeps of the Spirit, who cannot be, save from His friendliness, speeds the procession unending of those who by unfolding will become like unto Him, is the open and miraculous secret of the ages.

ROBERT Dearest mother, will your house of cloud with moonbeams imbedded in its every column, with the light of stars expanded for its every window, with the airs of heaven blowing through it and

moulding it into beauty, float downward and find establishment upon the strange and bitter earth? Will it remain firm-poised and solidly concreted when the storms of controversy beat against it, and the bigot of the olden faith discovers it not squared by the rule man made some ages since, and the bigot of the last evolution perceives it bears not in its pediment the statued groups he conjures withal?

EDITH All dreams are true, and man made never one of them.

EDMUND All faiths are true, and man made never one of them.

ANGELA And my mamma is true, and you ought to believe in her.

ROBERT I stand between you,—on one side of me faith; on the other thought like a dream,—they reach out hands to me, and I long to clasp them.

MRS. HERBERT They are but one, and at the centre is love; you need have no fear of them.

EDMUND The walls of the new city are indeed beginning to rise, and the clink of the trowel is heard, light and cheerful.

ROBERT What is it to be, mother? nowadays when the Drama walks across the scene in its old clothes with the soil and wrinkles of many days' wear upon it, and the easy fit of subjection to daily and commonplace uses, have you had the courage to refurbish the old helmets, reburnish the shields re-

covered from the cellarage, and rebuild the fallen and unbattlemented walls of castle and palace? Have you breathed your twentieth century soul into the old romance, and does she walk again the fields, which look askance upon her resuscitation, and wonder why the sad ghost does not stay in her time-stained tomb? After all nothing, I suppose, ever dies.

MRS. HERBERT There may yet be some sparks of energy left in the fancies of an older period; the dew may yet vanish from the old flowers beneath the lips of the old suns; sweet affections may yet harbor under the eyelids of the dimming folk who wore tunic or doublet. You shall see, and through the extravagance of the fantastical music may perchance run the shining tracery of aspirations that wear indifferently well the splendors of bygone fabrics or the subdued utilities of to-day.

The Curtain Falls.

THE PLAY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Duke of Modena.
Fra Giacomo, Franciscan monk.
Alfarabi, Saracenic astrologer.
Pepe, court jester.
Pietro, father of Fiordimonda.
Giosue, son of Pietro.
First courtier.
Second courtier.
Messenger of the Pope.

Dowager Duchess of Modena.
Fiordimonda, peasant girl.
Liza, mother of Fiordimonda.
Susanna, betrothed of Giosue.

The Apparition of Death.
Courtiers, Priests, Ladies, Populace, Servants.
Scene: Modena and its environs.
Time: Fourteenth Century.

THE PLAY

ACT I.

SCENE: The great square of the city of Modena. At the back the Palace of the Duke with its broad flight of steps. On the right a cathedral. On the left the Public Gardens with fountains and wide walks stretching to the horizon.

Two courtiers enter from the cathedral.

FIRST COURTIER I shall surely be forced to loosen my belt so as to give me greater ease for laughter. The Frate must be in secret collusion with various angels at the court of Heaven, and by such ways as we may not understand receive the intents of the High King himself. Ha! ha! ha!

SECOND COURTIER I hardly am in sympathy with your much mirth in these so heavily weighted times. I fear the prophecies of the good monk may find themselves enlarged in the aroused and tameless indignation of the masses, and deeds result whose end is more than we can fathom.

FIRST COURTIER I cannot yet forget the Frate's eyes and mien and words. The rabble listen with breathless lips, that whiten as his anger grows more

fierce and strong. He master of the Future, forsooth—ha! ha! ha! Why, 'tis but yesterday he stood in tattered garb at the monastery door, and begged for bread, a fugitive from a small town, I have forgotten where, because of his loud preachments; the Duke should take example from the rulers of that place and send him on his way to Rome, where the good Pope will soon know how to snaffle him, ha! ha! ha! How ugly too his brown rough visage, with its thick discolored lips and monstrous nostrils quivering in his fury;—but yet the smouldering eyes beneath the heavy coarse-haired brows—the large and fathomless depths whence rise and fall the momentary flames of thoughts struggling behind them,—these almost move me as they do the rest.

Second Courtier He holds the people in the hollow of his hand. Mayhap the veil for him is lifted, and he sees and hears at times the councils of the Dominations and the Powers, who kneel around the very throne of God. I mind me of the seers and miracle-workers of the older time, and I am not altogether clear why such-like potencies should cease, or why in troubled seasons like our own these may not be renewed, that men may gain light and have help from the source of sources and the sea whence flow the myriad waters of all seas.

First Courtier You grow as priest-ridden as the rest. The sinister disaster that overhangs the

city like a heavy mist, rising and stealing around it, proceeding beyond its limits and thrusting its influences about the peaceful farms and villages, awakens in you perchance a dread not unlike the tradesman's, strengthened by the Frate's eloquence. Yet your reasonings have been clear on the dim causes of things, and the quarrelsome churchmen are like drought to the young shoots of faith. Come, laugh with me as in the days left not far behind; if the worst will come, we shall be merry at the worst.

SECOND COURTIER The plague is hourly wider in its clutch and ruin; the people shudder in their homes and close their doors, when the frequent death-procession seeks the nearest church; the cowled monks flit from poor roof to roof, and their white faces look with fear from under the shadowy head-covering; the palaces have emptied themselves of their gay dwellers, and the white pleasure houses amid the hills are held against intruders; but nothing stays the hideous tide that rises until, like frightened hangers on the ridge of rock, we hear the hiss of the nearing waves, and the white foam shows on our feet; escape is none; the neighbor towns are locked against us, and Death usurps the seat of life and shows his ghastly sceptre in ruinous rule everywhere. The time is not for smiles, our sin is coming back an armèd host, and we are weaponless to oppose it.

FIRST COURTIER Our sin?—What sin? The

young Duke played with life a glittering game, and shone a leader in the pageant. Youth wears not the sobrieties of eld; when shall the blooms of joy and sheer delight bedeck us, save in the hours on which rests no dark shadow of cares, the fresh fair hours suffused with sun, before the bondage is taken on of responsibilities to be? As for me, I shall die laughing at the Frate's solemn owlishness—ha! ha! ha!

SECOND COURTIER The sinfulness sweeps forth from sea to sea; even Rome, the mistress of all righteousness, throws off her candid garments, and arrays herself in jewelled scarlet like the bitter woman of old, whose eyebeams were the lamps to mad debaucheries. Our Duke sat at the feet of the growing vileness, and drained the lurid goblet from her hand; the Frate speaks the voice of God—who knows? The plague and death play queen and king on all the streets, and yonder palace gives no merest transient reply—not even the mother's words finding their wonted access to the son.

FIRST COURTIER Strew the path of the destroyer with flowers! throw roses before his advancing footsteps! we will meet him with the wreaths of joy in our locks! Our lips shall not fly from their color, nor hearts from the loves that lured us on to the dance! Life fleets, and who knows of the days thereafter! The words of monkishness and the pronunciations of the papal pleasures have both departed

from the truth that once ensouled them; their halos are dim and at point of disappearance; come Destruction or Resurrection, I poise on the moment's coveted ecstasy, and laugh my passage unto the predestined close—ha! ha! ha!

SECOND COURTIER See where the Arabian Alfarabi steals from the palace doors, and with him, Pepe, our old utterer of wisdom's scraps and instances, the fool more ludicrously solemn than his daily custom. They beckon us.

The Courtiers cross to the palace steps.

ALFARABI The Duke will meet the heresy-hunting Frate here as he goes hence unto some monastery. The boldness of the man waxes apace, and the overshadowing tree of loyalty to hereditary authority, wearing the leaves and fruit of many generations' stress for the people's welfare, and giving these food and shelter, feels the hot rain of his unceasing storms, and is like to burn down to mere roots, unless the sky of his fierce insolence can be rolled like a scroll back on itself.

PEPE The mere necessity of the time; all things go backward; the prince of the land into the common man, who stops to talk and maunder about his affairs; the ladies of the court into beribboned peasant girls, who feed on curds and cream; the state into the rabbledom from whence it rose and the chaos which it has surpassed for too long a time, forsooth;

and the bold Friar into the Godhead whence the great Church fell, for the sweetness of the earth has made it somewhat mindless of its source.

First Courtier I, too, dear Pepe, into that innocent boyishness which ever takes your worst cross-grainèd mood as one more plume to be uplifted and set into my cap of lightsomeness.

Pepe You wear your cap, indeed, jauntily, and with such security as bids one pause and wonder whence the fine swagger comes. Better you wore the white upon your face; perchance your confidence may fall, beyond all hope of rescue, into that fear from which the ones more fearful are the liker to emerge.

Second Courtier The Duchess is to be a partner in the long deferred interview?

Alfarabi I have not deemed it wise the Duke should meet this strange conference without the help afforded him by nature, and ready at hand to bestead him in his need. His known audacity in act, and indignant generosity of spirit, leave him at the mercy of those subtile diplomats who understand how to play upon that tensely strung instrument. The Duchess will confront the populace, and her mild majesty of old has ever found a deep response of love from their obedient hearts.

Second Courtier Let me, too, show a face of courage in the teeth of this defiance.

ALFARABI Sir, I give you thanks, and had the hope that you would join your hand to ours.

FIRST COURTIER The apparition, that accompanies the flight of so many lives into eternity, has for some days not darkened in the skies; do you expect him also to make an appearance in the interchange of compliments?

ALFARABI Who fathoms the secrets of the universe? To my great consternation I have beheld the image of grim Death amid the pallid skies, a figure with dull level brows, and eyes like sullen starlight, when the night is gray. His hands were lifted in the act of prayer, and around him surged a sea of forms, indistinguishable and fraught with horror. Have you not seen?

SECOND COURTIER Yes, but yestereve. The twilight held the sky, and one poor mother with her babe, just dead and growing cold, within her arms, came rushing towards me as I paced the deserted streets. Her agonizing eyes turned to the west where hung a faint ghost of the moon, and I saw the Mystery floating up and away, his robe of black shaken as it were by the wind of his rapid flight; on the face, however, glimmered a faint premonition of light, a forethought of a coming radiance; the mother gazing felt the same soft gale of hope strike upon the heart as I, for her drawn face gently relaxed, and the tears poured from her unfreezing

eyes, as she bent and kissed the chill and purpling lips of her child.

First Courtier Why stand you glowering at the church door thus, good friend Pepe? Do you expect to see the Master of Fate, the visible Death that dominates us from the clouds, stalk with the Frate from yonder treasonable dome?

Pepe I see nothing there; I have eyes within me, and they behold a vision too.

First Courtier Perchance you will reveal your wonder sights; Pepe, the Prophet! harken unto him! The Frate wears the cap and bells! Pepe utters the sublime! Proceed, great master, we would hear—and laugh!

Pepe Death—death—why speak of death? Look into the heart
And tell me what you find there; I have held
Strange and divine discourse with spirits too;
The Frate speaks no mysteries to me;
I marvel at the fear of death that glooms
Across the lives of men, and, like a bell,
The certain signal of a foreknown fate,
Sounds into desolation all their homes
And freezes on the lip the strainèd smile.
Yea, I will tell my thought, for in the night
The shadow came and stood beside my couch,
And on his soundless trembling lips I read
His very soul; yea, I will prophesy,

And if the Priest grow pallid under ban,
Thrusting him forth of church or heaven, the Fool
Will yet remain to give a voice to truth;
For where all men grow mad, and life inverse
Recoils upon its substance to its ruin,
The Fool becomes sure wisdom's oracle.

SECOND COURTIER Nay, Pepe, are you fled from all your wits?
Have you played games with folly far too long,
And now the farce wherewith you mastered us,
Having outleaped your fine control, has farced
Itself into safe masterdom of you?

ALFARABI Let him proceed; the time has many voices,
And God reveals himself in unknown ways.

PEPE Yea, listen unto me a fool; for Death
Relieves me of my folly, and when dead
Folly gives place to Hope and Truth divine.
O great restorer, Death, when all the earth
Is swept away to living nothingness,
White Heaven shines fair without a cloud, and light
Is sovereign of the chainèd cowering dark;
Lo! at your feet I kneel and lift my heart
To you, benignant Death; your hand is laid
On shuddering pain, and smiles are born again
With simple lustre; float upon the air,
And deeply penetrate the region vast

Of toil and sweat and anguish manifold;
Shine in the skies, O Mystery large and grim,
I know your splendor, I have eyes to see,
O gentle-minded, who are soft of tread,
And potent to annul the flickering ills
That snake-like spring from ambush in the grass,
And feed upon our souls; sweet master hear,
Come nearer yet, and let me surely look
Into your moistened eyes; your tears are joys
Of high expectancy; above the sky
I pierce to regions where the myriads dwell
Who have been led of you; their faces pure
Glow in the pallor of sheer radiancy
Like brighter stars; for there the night is day,
And all the suns are glory; let me raise
The fountain of my ceaseless heart to catch
The gold that falls from you; come closer yet,
And kiss me, lip and neck and brow; speak low,
Your words are but for me, who listen well,
And know your very heart; I am your son,
The poor and pitiable fool, my mocks flow forth
From your clear sanctuary; they understand
Me not, I am your secret emissary,
No perfume from their pleasure's flower cast forth
To give them gladness as they strangely deem,
Gladness, forsooth, another name for grief,
That truly slays within its cold abyss;
Lo! all this light is duskier than the sea

Where it is deepest, and the ragged cave
Whither you lure opens afar on blooms
That correspond to changeless suns in heaven;
O dearest comforter, and everlasting lamp,
O guide upon the hidden pathway, friend
And seer, O sorcerer, who turn to fire
The misconceivèd horror, like a child
And fool I am forever close beside you,
Thrust darts of yours into man's aching bliss,
Slay with your help his groaning ecstasies;
I call you all mine own, and reign with you,
Seeing that your majesty glooms with its excess
Of heavenly flame the mighty quivering skies;
I am your visible self and do your will,
Being beholden to you as a child to sire,
I, sole of men, who know you and adore!

FIRST COURTIER There is no laughter in these words of yours,
My Pepe, and your eyes gleam with wild fires
That make me shudder; oh, begone, blind fear
That seizes me apace, and blurs the world;
My heart is cold, and I fall from myself
Into the night whither I would not go.

ALFARABI Arouse yourselves, for the great scene begins;
The crowd streams from the wide church doors and gape
Upon us here with eyes that are not friendly.

The multitude pours from the cathedral and assembles with threatening looks and gestures before the steps of the palace. Fra Giacomo passes through the press slowly and halts, looking up at Alfarabi.

FRA GIACOMO Where is your master?
ALFARABI Nay,
you ask too much;
What servitor of greatness dares to know
Such where or when?
FRA GIACOMO There is but One Supreme
Whose greatness passes all men's search, the God
Who yet reveals Himself to all.
ALFARABI I dread
To thrust my furthest piercing reach of sight
Into the depths where you are still at home.
A VOICE We would hold parley with the Duke.
ANOTHER Yea, so;
Our wives and children sicken fast and die
Beneath the hideous spell that fills the air.
A THIRD He is the source of the increasing wrong;
He must make answer, and the fair day see
Our freeing from the monster.
FRA GIACOMO Lo! I gaze
Upon a Fate that forms itself within
Yon fleeting cloud; where is the Duke?
ALFARABI Behold!
He comes to front you and your followers vain.

ACT I.

The palace doors are thrown open, the Duke emerges and places himself next to Alfarabi; before a word is spoken, the Duchess Mother appears on his other side; she is robed in black and wears a long veil; Pepe stands on the step below.

DUKE Good people and my friends, and you, my brother,
Whom I revere beyond the wont of men,
And whose great visions I would fain behold
With clearness like your own, I come this morn
To hear your will, and at this verge of time,
When horror has possession of the hours,
And dull despair is borne upon the winds
Miraculous, to find perchance some way
To attain the inner Heavens, and get high help
To drag back into night the sinister shape
That threatens us. If you have aught to urge
That may tend to the general good, or hold
A hope, however dim, to put from us
This widening plague, and bring back peace and light
Into our darkened souls, I give you leave
To speak your mind to the uttermost, that strength
May build again our confidence in life,
And we may walk its many opening paths,
Nor ever turn to evade the soft-foot fear,
That puts his hand on shoulder ere one breathes
Fresh from the latest shudder. Here say on,
And spare not me who would do well by you.

FRA GIACOMO God speaks through us; His messages fly forth

From his serene abode, and seek the hearts
Elect of him to give them earthly harbor.
Now that the season ripens to the end
Which needs their utterance, lo! I come not glad
That I am holden of the power which thrusts
Me forth of mine own self, and makes me voice
And tongue solely of aims that are the will
Of the great Master of the Heavens above;
My Duke, and if I dare on freer hours
Not long passed through and unforgettable,
My friend, I do upon myself much ill
And bitter violence in the task I bear,
And would the toil were that of some one else
To bring the unwelcome tidings.

DUKE Nay, halt not.

DUCHESS Whatso the land demands is the sure act
To which my son gives heed; in the dead past
His kingly race was ever bold of soul
To give the Right place on the green expanse
Of earth, and longings of the wildest sort
For personal pleasure or the sweet behoof
Of self athirst for joy felt the strong foot
Upon their swift undoing; since the grim night,
When the red news of victory meteor-wise
Flared on mine eyes, that darkened in the fire
Of the land's glory with the loss to me
Of my chief life, and the flags mad to take
The winds in exultation drooped above him dead,

Who was your Duke, I have not fronted you,
My people, though your griefs and loves were near
My silent chamber through the fleeting days,
Until this moment when I bid you think
His father's blood flows in the son's young veins,
His father's strength shines on the unwrinkled brow,
His father's truth dwells in the unfaltering pulse,
And what you will of noblest and of best
Is the deep thought that is his mid of life.

A Voice I am not clear in what the Frate spoke.

Second Voice Let us go hence; the Duke will do us right,
We have been much misled, and need not fear.

Fra Giacomo Lady, I would that in your gentle hands
Lay the sad fate of those who know but ill
Where dwells their chiefest welfare.

Duke Nay, speak on.

Fra Giacomo In the dim past when this great commonweal
Rose with the help of God, deeds wonderful
And mighty raised to swift pre-eminence
The lordly men, whose sons have worn the crown
And given their blood to build the city; here
A race resplendent held the people's awe,
And was their very soul in act and thought,
And saw laborious days in building firm
The will of all into just sight and strength;

The citizen beheld his loftiest dream
Walk clad in gold before him, and the love
Of a wise people made foundation sure
For the rich citadel of state and rule.
The neighboring nations looked with envious greed
On fields of waving grain and hamlets sown
Amid the faithful hills; and war was friend,
As were the regents in the many heavens,
And burnished helmets of our Dukes' wore gems
Of victory on victory, glorious years
Of crescent power used for the good of all,
The noble pride that is the country's soul,
And girds our territory with the puissant fear,
Which is protector more than soldiers armed
And blazonried for war. Those days were kind,
But in the latter times our Dukes forget
Their deep allegiance to the purpose large
That underlies our lives, and spend in joys
Unhallowed and the pomps of vain caprice
The substance wrung from wasted men and fields,
And the loud voice is heard of revelries,
Which din the ears of Heaven, and call from God
Strange portents to reveal the wrath and scorn
Filling the minds celestial.

DUKE Youth is plea
Of not unworthy weight, my father, 'gainst
Your cumulate charge; I have not heart to play
The laggard here; I have not shunned to taste

The wine of life, and at the banquet sate
Crowned with the garlands which belong to years
Unsprinkled of hairs hoary; strength will come
To wield the sceptre as my fathers did,
And weave the statecraft of to-day in webs
Not less in beauty than the earlier toil;
These ills have brought again unto my side
The help that is made wise with truest love,
And you, dear counsellor, shall give aid to us,
My mother and myself, in gaining back
What loss of loyalty gathers like a cloud
Of boding storm around our seat of rule.
The rumors of new wars will find me strong
To pierce their secrets, and the roar of fight
Will find my helmet at its hottest heart.

ALFARABI Your majesty yields too far to these bold threats,
For of your goodness they will fashion darts
To thrust it through and through; stand forth a king,
And bid them seek their gaping dwellings lest
What is their due strike swift upon their heads.

FRA GIACOMO Too late, my liege; I ask you listen well,
Nor let the outland wizardry bear you far
From what must surely be; this people pays
With death on death for your gross sins, and life
Lost in mere harlotry and fellowship

With vileness manifold; I raise the cross
Above the suffering multitude, and call on you
To lay aside your usurpation of just rule,
And give to hands unsoiled and brains unmarred
With poisonous thoughts and dreams the vantage high
Whence good may surelier come; some palace waits
Amid the hills not far, where you may sport
And ruin but yourself and those mad ones
Who follow in your train. In God's high name
I do command your abdication; Death
And Hate will cease not till the deed be done.

FIRST COURTIER Away with him into some dungeon's hold!
Why stay we paltering here and listen to
This senseless treason falsely called of Heaven?
My sword is ready, speak, my liege!

A VOICE Away
With the base Duke!

A WOMAN My boy died yesterday;
Who can bring him to me again? I cry
On all men, make an end of the dire plague.

DUKE I am prepared for whatso God may will;
Friends, know that power is but a sterile tree
Where grow few blossoms and most bitter fruit.
I am not so enamored of this golden light
Wherein I stand, the wonder of the fool
And envy of the mindless, that I am

Strenuous to hold my place upon this height
In opposition to a secret good
Which cannot be save I am far away;
Nor am I so far lost in search of joys
But that the wine-cup palls, and the wild dance
Of revelries fades to a mere shade which has
No shred of fascination; I have been
The child of much misrule, which made me kin
Unto its degradations; ancestry
Has been to me no gift unmixt with crime,
And what I am I have not found yet clear,
So full am I and so marred in my life
With hopes and longings dark and terrible;
Yea, better is the simple way he treads
Who finds himself, and hath not rolled upon
His eager soul a thousand usages
And rushing moods and wanton ecstasies
Come from a mighty race, than mine or prince's
The day plays games withal, until the bliss
Of seeing what he is has grown a toil
Past his intensest reach of expectation.
If it be so that we are shaped and bound
Into one life, and that life's heart am I,
I shall not be unready to pluck forth
That heart with my sheer proper strength of hand,
Finding it poisonous to the body's health;
Yet there may be leap from great ill to ill,

Showing a worser depth and night less ruled
By sparser stars; I am not versed in glooms
Of strange prophetic words, and would not give
A loose to powers now held in rigorous leash
To tear apart the builded forms of rule.
The light will surely shine on eyes that wait
For the great vision truly send of God.
Unto that high command I yield myself
When the blest summons sounds, but I stay here,
Monarch of all this realm, till certainty
Points forth the way to tread.

DUCHESS From sire to son
The line direct consummates might in you;
Shall we pull down the toilsome work of years,
And bring again the struggling rage that tore
The life of men before the state was framed
To bulwark all against the innate fire
Of savagery, which burnt away best deeds
As fast as these arose? We talk no more
With the fierce madness; prophecy benign
Has other aims than to destroy what is
The fundament that holds it out to view.

FRA GIACOMO Visions have poured on me in constant crowds,
And each uplift though differenced in its glory
Bore still one purport; rule is overthrown
Of the race noble which has governed here
To ends superb and high; the close has come

Of one great age of man, and from the soil
Healthful and fresh of yet untainted souls
Springs the new tree of lordship; falter not,
But listen to the word of the Supreme.

PEPE One king there is, and his grim name is Death;
Foresight has found its term; we must pass back
Into the shade which is divine with light;
You are deceived, O priest; I am more near
The golden sources; wisdom is a blind
Dullard, who gropes along the mountain side
Behind which is the sun, and in the gloom
Takes some faint lustre falling who knows whence
For the fierce flame of day. Here wear my cap,
I will assume the cowl and prophesy,
I am more just than you.

DUKE Alfarabi,
The stars that rose upon my destiny
Glow yet with unshorn beams, and you have read
My story in their script mysterious. Say
What import have the terrors that assail us?
You utter wonders that are still unseen,
And look upon the world which is to be.
Unravel if you can the Frate's dreams,
And bring us light if so you have the power.

ALFARABI Great Duke, night on long night I scanned the skies,
And sought to weave their cloudy utterances

Into a sentence of clear meaning; mixed
With much that baffles all my skill, I read
Some change that hovers at the brink of act,
And on the instant will with singular charm
Transform our life and world; nor more than that
Yon priest affirms in his less luminous accents;
How far he speaks the sense of his great church
We hear not, till the messenger from the Pope
Return with his great Master's sure response;
He cannot now be far; while silence holds
From that white throne, we must not lend belief
To what may be but frenzied and half crazed
Expressions of the general fear.

FRA GIACOMO As you
I wait that seal upon my visionings.

DUKE Unto such time we do defer our act
And longer deem it all unwise to stay
More question here.

ALFARABI My liege, forget not too
The mind of man is the interpreter
Of prophecy and yonder speaking skies;
Rush not on deeds until the oracle
Within the soul reveals what else is dark;
This visible realm and dreams and wondrous hopes
Pass as a pompous empty show, and reach
No certain order, save the light within
Binds them with its safe lucence; change can come
Benignant but from the noble source of change,

And the deep will confirms the horoscope
Of great achievement, thrusts to ruinous nought
Foreknown antagonists, and lends vague acts
The life that makes them real; be you king
Of your own self, and all the stars and clouds,
The cries of your hurt people, yonder church
With its loud words of anger, yield to you
As forces used for truest ends, and you reveal
In your high person the fulfilment high
Of what is still the highest heaven.

DUKE I hear;
I read that thought and make my power more sure
Upon a more obedient people; know
I am your monarch yet! I am your king!

As he speaks, the Apparition of Death appears in the skies over the ducal gardens; the figure of solemn visage and robed in black is encircled by a faint and pulsing line of light; the people with cries of dismay fall upon their knees; the Frate stands in the midst erect, and uplifts his crucifix, on which falls a full burst of radiance; the Duke evinces no sign of fear, but remains firm, as do his attendants around him.

FRA GIACOMO Blind mouths, behold your answer;
who speaks there?
O people, who shall lead you forth from Death
Into the light of life? Delay not, God,
But pour destruction out upon the heads
Of those blood-guilty men; let not their baseness
Thrive and utterly mock you; bring us peace
From our thick-crowding evils; hear our cries

That pierce your ears with wailing; end our woes
And purge with fire the regnant wickedness;
And you, false rulers, flee the impending wrath
Of outraged Heaven, and bring no further death
Upon a suffering kingdom; forth! I say,
And leave us air that we may freely drink,
And light that is not darkened by such shades
As deepen there across the affrighted skies.

Through the sound of the mingled imprecations of the men, and the wailing of the women, is heard, coming nearer and nearer, the clatter of a horse's hoofs.

ALFARABI The missive of the Pope!

FRA GIACOMO False
counsellor, cease;
What have your infidel lips to do with Heaven?

The people rise and crowd forward; the messenger of the Pope is seen with a letter in his hand; he dismounts and on his knee presents it to the Duke. A man steps to the horse's head and holds it by the bridle; the animal is covered with sweat and mired by the journey. The messenger seems worn and jaded but filled with a fire of spirit in harmony with his errand.

DUKE Read, read, Alfarabi, we do believe
That now we have the word and voice of God.

ALFARABI (*Reads*) The Church has always felt that the sovereignty of the great lords, furthering her vast purposes under the rule for the maintenance of law and right in many lands, cannot suffer infringement or debasement without a tem-

porary disfigurement of the symmetry which belongs to her as image of the order that is in Heaven; wherefore she deems it well to counsel patience to her true adherents, and will send up to all the Holy Saints and Angels and the Blest Mother of God her prayers and intercessions that the sad horror impending over her belovèd City of Modena may be dissipated and vanish away; meanwhile she directs obedience to the Duke, and enjoins upon her worthy servant, Fra Giacomo, that he shall be silent in respect of his deep sights of supernatural verities, and defer his many eloquent expositions, until she may interpret their rich significance, and further suggest what it is right in these strange premises to say and do. Signed, The Pope.

DUCHESS The Heavens have sent their answer.

FRA GIACOMO Yea, the Heavens!

The whole scene fills with gloom, and the curtain falls.

ACT II.

The scene presents a farm-house on one side; in front of it a garden of many flowers; on the other side and at the back a thick growth of trees. The time is morning. Alfarabi enters from the grove.

ALFARABI What further need to ask the stars for help,
Interrogate with utmost skill their wheels
About an unsure centre, or scan the shapes
Their bewildering movements take, in hope to catch
Some sign of perished evil, or perchance to learn
Whence sweeps the unabated misery
Upon a too much burdened realm? I have
No deeper art of search and am struck dumb
With mere amazement; I would gladly flee
Forth of the night that grows more dull and dense
With passage of the heavy-laden hours;
I brood upon the soul of the vast mass
Of seething wrong, and long to read aright
Wherein the nation ails, but I find nought
Save blackness and the monotone on high
Of threatened pain and grief; and yet I dare
Not move beyond the circle of grim gloom,
For I have now become a part of it; for me
As for the huddled swarm of anguished men

Forebodings rise, like mists from intervales
Frowned on by silent mountain peaks, whose sense
I apprehend as vaguely as the low-browed carle
Who follows horse and plow on working day.
So in the doom I stay till lightning's fall
Brings glare of dissolution, or the sun
Glows once again unvexed of dusky rays
That shroud his clear divinity. My prince,
Whom I have led as guide past waywardness
Of youth, not wholly guilty, unto a high
Self-governance in his noble-hearted aim
To grant frank play to purposes that are
The nerve of justest needs, sinks in a cold
And hardened scorn of every instant act,
Impatient and unmindful of the beckoning gleam
Of half-illumined understanding, sure
That nought may now avail. For one brief hour
I breathe the fresher air, look on the flowers
That flaunt their freedom from the bitter strife,
Find that the clouds fleet by me joyously,
As though no sorrow lurked in any place,
Watch the mad butterflies in their hot flight
And bliss; light is around me, but the storm
Feels no relapse from its weird grimness in
The deeps of my devising, struggling mind,
That clambers and attains not; so I go
Back to my task unholpen, wearied, lost.
Yet let me linger; a vague hope revives

Within me, whence I know not or wherefore,
That my laborious thought is at the point
To reach some vantage, gain the ground
Of a more trusty sight, an instinct strong
To track the aid I am here to seek. Alack!
I too give way to folly and am loth
To abandon the sweet peace, and plunge anew
Into the abysm of black despair and fear.
This is mere weakness, yet I cannot go,
I am held strangely beyond my wit and will,
And wait perforce the fate that is to be.

He passes into the wood. Giosue enters from the house.

GIOSUE Susanna, Susanna, do you not hear me? Where can the girl have gone? I suppose she is hiding from me, but I do not mean to budge a step from the door. The more you humor the women, the more they take you by the nape of the neck, and hold tight to you until you get so used to a sort of vice upon you that you would for no reason have it otherwise. Susanna! Susanna!

SUSANNA I am coming in a moment! Why are you so noisy at this early time of the morning?

GIOSUE Come then, and do not keep me kicking my heels together here all alone. I have a good deal to tell you, and not a long time to do it in either, I assure you.

SUSANNA Have I not heard it before many, many times?

She walks very slowly from behind the house, and looks at Giosue laughingly.

What may it be that you are in such a hurry to tell?

He runs toward her, takes her around the waist and kisses her. She makes a brief and mock resistance.

GIOSUE That is the first greeting that I am bound to give you.

SUSANNA Who bound you to it? You are not going to say that it was I?

GIOSUE No one else bound me but you; I have been bound to you for these many years, and as long as you look at me so with those deep eyes of yours, the tether that connects us grows only stronger and stronger. I can stand it no further, and I shall tell my honorable mother all about it, and the wedding bells will have to ring before a great many hours are over. This love-making in the early morning, and then again for a few short minutes in the twilight, with much demure mystery during the day, may please your desire for doing things in a manner in which no one else does them, but I have been violent unto my frank and outspoken disposition too continuously, and I will have no more of it.

SUSANNA Let me count up—five times last week—and four times since yesterday—that makes nine times in all—and each time a little more sharpness in the voice, and great deal more anger in the

words—no, dear, dear Giosue, you must let me spin out our pleasure to a slenderer length, or I will have to put you to a test that will be awful, and you can judge what I am able to do by the daily writhings in which I make you indulge. I tell you that I have not half tried, and, if you force me, I will contrive a scheme that will take a portion of the excessive red from your face.

GIOSUE But, Susanna dear, what is it all for? I have a neat little farm not far away waiting for you and me, and you have won the love of us all so deeply that we are more than glad to follow whither you lead, and you dangle your promise over me like an apple to a child, just out of his reach, and withdraw it quickly when he gets near it. Come, now, say the word.

SUSANNA Are you quite sure, Giosue, that your mother will care to take me as a daughter, a waif that I am, left on the doorsteps by the waters of a chance stream? O my darling boy, I have scarcely dared to look up to you since I felt that I belonged to you for fear that some sudden news may arrive, and my story would all be made clear, and I should be taken away from you.

GIOSUE That is your secret, then, is it? We will put an end to it once for all. Who cares where you came from, it is quite enough to know that you are here, and are what you are. I am thinking, though,

that we are going to miss these little frightened meetings in the morning when the dew has not yet fled to the clouds, and the fresh sun laughs over the fields, or those tendernesses in the evening, when we sometimes can only clasp hands for an instant and then run apart.

SUSANNA Do not tell, Giosue, for a few more days; let us live the summer through in this goodly manner, and delay until the frosty winter before we bind ourselves down to the humdrum of being with each other all the time. I am sure that I shall have to stay away from you for a day or two every month, and return unexpectedly, or I shall not be able to endure the thing. Besides the word I am always looking for may reach me at any moment.

GIOSUE I am done with dilly-dallying forever; I do not bother myself concerning the news that you talk so much about all the time; I would not listen to it if it came; my father says when he found you wrapped up, pale and cold upon the doorstep, he felt that you should be his daughter, and I intend to make you his in very truth; but some one is coming—remember I shall tell to-day.

He kisses her and both escape by different ways. Fiordimonda enters from the house.

FIORDIMONDA The dream glowed as before; my sleep was filled
With wondrous light, and the white visitants

Came forth in luminous crowds, the melody
They sang floated mysteriously around me,
Divinely soft and vague but yet its urge
Was strong upon my heart to rise and go
Unto the plague-dark city; night on night
The impulse burns within me; dare I leave
Undone the act whereto the choristers bid me,
And the sweet Virgin Mother smiles and beckons?
At midnoon of the darkness as I lay,
And softly breathed a prayer, a sudden calm
Sank on mine eyelids and the world was changed;
The glory of pure light swept under me
In wide-extending sea, a field divine
Where grew such blooms as have no name whereby
The living may conceive them, but the dead,
Clothed in clear holiness of gentle thought,
Wear them as garlands, or, like fleeting stars
Vanishing as they fall, shower them forth
On purest souls dwelling in realms of earth,
Within whom thereon leap imaginings
Most high, new births of joy and faith. Far off
A song woven of sorrow overlived
And pain that had become an ecstasy
Which paled the faces of the angels. Trees,
Swayed by soft winds that were part of the glory
Of music, shook blossoms down over paths
Leading unto the deep allurement's source;
The smiles of the blue sky woke echoes fair

Of hopes within the heart which pleasure youth
And fade as the long years grow colorless
And fierce with passion's hues; the loveliness
Was undermysteried with suavest tones,
Which were somehow like flowers about to bloom,
Or words about to burst in fire from lips
The noblest that may be; I had no fear
And was so close akin to all I saw
And felt, that never had I been so free,
So brimmed with life, which was not mine yet surged
Sweetly beneath my lids, unwet with tears
But blest with all the sadness of pure bliss.
Lo! as I waiting stood a voice called me,
And forth I went as one whose lover speaks
And bids unto a great solemnity.
My eagerness of will made that will mine,
My heart of choice enclosed within that choice
Rose into might, which wore the heavens eterne
As a bright star may own its many beams,
Or the just soul its petals of clear thoughts;
I was the very light and inmost splendor
Of womanhood miraculous and best,
Which had the strength of arm to dare and do,
And loved all things as mother loves her babes.
I sought the central path, and walked beneath
The thick-leaved trees into the golden shade,
A deeper light amid a whiter glow,
And far off heard the many voicèd brook

Fall in cascades of clearly uttered song
Adown its sheer ravine; there was one sense
In all the sound, one soul in all the rays
Of brilliant mystic utterance, and I felt
As if borne forward by the smooth soft waves
Of an imperial ocean that was love
From Life's deep heart poured out around me. Now
The forest thinned, and the wide silver plain,
A vast and billowy reach of marvellous blooms
With the pale hills to leftward, took my joy
Into its fierier passion, and my feet sped on,
Swift as the thought that reaches out to God,
When prayer makes holy the white cleansèd heart,
And He is nearer than our very breath,
And close as light within the eye thus made
Akin to heaven with sight. I stood amid
The singing, and I knew myself a part
Of the grand chorus and I too burst forth
In melody, that lay below the depths
Of hope and memory, and was the life
Beneath the passage of mere days, the faith
Which was the rose's heart, and knew the hues
Of petal on thin petal as changing gleam
Of its significant desire. A touch
Upon my eager waiting eyes, the dream
Shone whiter far, and the strange realm became
A nobler symbol and envisagement
Of active love, the inmost feminine

And urgent power which has for wont and use
To gather close the feeble suffering soul,
To comfort it amid its deep distress,
To guide its faltering footsteps up and far
Unto the vision of high God. About
Were multitudes of argent choristers,
With swift intent to aid and bless, a fire
Of flowers ranged through the pure of space,
A living harmony of exquisite minds,
A visible infinite music whose clear tones
Were pulsing selves, whose meaning sweet and dear
Was the Great Mother, throned within the sky,
And glorious over all as the white moon
Paling her clans of glad-attendant stars.
And I was of them, and I deeply felt
With utmost joy my thoughts within their thoughts,
My life beat in the vocal life of all,
And this one word I heard, and from the lips
Of the Mild Virgin echoed on the lips
Of the unending votaries, and last,
Burning within me as the central wish
Of my true present being, heard that word
Flowing along my veins and piercing me
Throughout what seemèd mine yet was not I.
"My daughter, unto you my heart of love
I pour resistless as the light of day
Fills the blue cup of Heaven, for you are made
One with the good that builds and fashions men

Into its likeness; go unto the toil
That waits you in your world below; the eyes
And strength of trust are given you; what I am,
The love that bears within its purposed flame
All life grown therein splendid and most fair,
And blossoming through me to its utmost height,
Shall dwell in you, as night gives way to gold
Of morning, when the regent sun begins
His march triumphal up unto the peak
And centre; you shall be a messenger,
A sunrise-clothed forerunner of the truth,
About to find its home upon your earth."
Slowly the high song faded, and the light
Withdrew itself into its mystery;
My sleep was dark, save for the memory
Which kept me comforted and strong to learn
The way appointed me; so I awoke,
And look for sign that soon must come; I stand
And watch his sure approach, who leads me forth
Where I may do the Holy Mother's will,
And be in sooth her deed within the land.

She pauses as if she were at the point of hearing a voice from above; she crosses her hands upon her breast and listens.

The Song of the Spirits.

O maiden fearless,
O passion peerless,
Lift your eyes tearless

To the sisters who bring
The voice of the patient Mother,
Hers and none other,
Into your heart to sing.

The gift you have given,
Unforced and undriven,
The gift you have striven
On her altar to lay,
The gift of your heart and its inmost
Burning upwards, shall win most
Largess poured forth from her day.

Eyes shall you be to them,
Swift shall you flee to them,
Heart, who would see to them,
Here in their dark;
Illumining those who murmur,
And have need of the firmer
Strength, which will pilot their bark.

We shall ever be near you,
Uplift you and cheer you,
Direct you and veer you
Unto the Deed,
Through the gloom of the bitter anguish
Wherein linger and languish
The many who falter and bleed.

Star-like and golden,
Of our eyes beholden,
By our loves enfolden
  You shall surely guide
Their passions that wander,
The lives which they squander,
  On to the Mother's sweet side.

Then newly risen
Out of their prison,
Their cloudy season
  Of coldness and fear,
You shall show them the sunlight,
The mystical One Light,
  That makes the whole darkness clear.

The morn has broken,
The spirit awoken,
Not far is the token
  Which is yours to seek;
The patient, the suffering, the lowly,
Lead up to realms holy,
  An end of days grievous and bleak.

Alfarabi approaches her from the wood; she turns to him unsurprised and expects his coming.

FIORDIMONDA You are from the dark city's boundaries,
And need help for the great and savage woe?

ALFARABI I am indeed escaped for some brief while
From the dense shadow which enwraps the town,
And shows no sign of lifting.

FIORDIMONDA Yes, we hear
How mothers leave their babes to starve and die,
Affrighted by the horror that begins
To drive the pink and fitful hues away
From the fast-changing skin; we hear that men,
In mere despair and wish most strange and wild
To save their loved ones from the nearing doom,
Slay them and bury next the polluted knife
Within their breasts. Are these mad rumors true?

ALFARABI Why harm your soul, dear girl, with sorrows grim,
Which are unlike aught that may rise and be
Within the circle of your dreams? Ask not
What can but cloud your eyes with sudden tears
To apprehend, and break upon your fair
And interwoven music of pure thoughts
With notes too harsh to join their melody.

FIORDIMONDA Yet must I know the tale; no darkness there
But I should feel it strike with its whole grief
Upon my heart; I lean unto the pain,
And let it pierce me with its many thorns
And wound me as it will with perfect strength,

And even if it be the worst of sin,
Product of wanderings in the arid night
Illumined with savageries for baleful stars,
The wrongs that moan in the bedraggled winds
And have brought forth to sight and rugged fear
The all-embracing plague as punishment,
If the insinuating poison creep
Into my every vein and change my blood
To fleetingness most vile, I still shall shrink not,
O Holy Mother, but fare forth and take
Your dire commands upon me. Therefore speak,
O stranger, and leave no part unsaid.

ALFARABI These words
Seem fraught with unearthly passion, and I pause
Before them, as one may when from afar
A fitful splendor speeds across the sky,
A shattering comet which perchance is sign
Of the advancing fate,—nay I speak ill,—
The nobler truth that has been looked for long.

FIORDIMONDA Stand not agaze upon me—you are wise,
I note you one of those benignant men
Who drink at the fountain which so few may find,
But which is source of hopes and dearer dreams.
Your ears cannot be closed against the cry
Of suffering, that grows deeper with its sense
Of helplessness; great sir, I cannot stay

The passage of another needless hour,
But must forth on the voyage set for me,
The centre of the horror and the vice,
That I may bring the tide of God to cleanse
The sickened time, and so restore his peace
Again into the city's streets.

ALFARABI (*In extraordinary astonishment*)
What mean
These cries and broken sobs? I am at loss
And sheer dismay to fathom what you urge;
How came such thoughts into your flower-clad home
Here mid the hills and far from every noise
Wherewith the multitude disturb the air?
Upon your tender soul, that sits within
Your swiftly changing eyes, what harm or grief
Dares make impressure? Child, your youth belongs
Unto this perfumed light, and should croon soft
Unto itself pure echoes of the joys
And murmurous molten blisses yet to be;
You cannot think to walk into the night,
Which masquerades for day, where the young Duke
Is as a portent sun to throw out rays
Of gloom as yonder globe its shafts of light.

FIORDIMONDA I see that you will hear me; you are near
The Duke's white throne, you are his friend, no doubt,
And can bring me to speech with him.

ALFARABI True but
For what good end? The Duke most gladly holds
Sweet converse with his subjects, and I can
Bring you to him; I am his friend, indeed;
And yet, perchance, knew you my name and state,
You would not willingly entrust yourself
Unto my guidance.

FIORDIMONDA When the angel speaks,
Who softly radiant oft has found his way
Into my slumbers of the middle night,
Or in the gold-green shadow of the grove
Has stood before me while outside the sun
Was clear upon the farthest hills, I am
Past doubt or fear; no danger's utmost threat
Can make the faintest breeze against my cheek,
I am so clothed upon with Heaven's own strength;
Who are you then, I fain would know.

ALFARABI Men say
That I am Evil's son, and lead the Duke
By dark and devious ways unto the pit
From whence I sprung; your saints and frowning church
Thrust me from their companionship; I come
From the far outlands, past the tideless sea,
And am a brother unto those who know
Another prophet, not your cross-borne wounded lord,
And worship the One God who mother has

Nor son, being life alone and shine thereof—
I am the Duke's adviser, Alfarabi.

FIORDIMONDA Then take me forth to him; I am enringed
Of powers, that make all hurt a lesser thing
To appall me than the leaf that flutters down
And rests upon my hair awhile. Upheld
By her dear touch, who bore a son to God
And brought new life to men, no hand nor tongue
May reach me with their least of ill. I pass
Through the dividing waves of air as may
The silver wings of some swift messenger
From near the very throne, a flight to earth,
But heavenly-free from contact with it.

ALFARABI Tell me
Whence came this purpose on your candid soul?
How woke from their deep sleep within your heart
These dreams of help to the beleaguered town?
Are they your own, or has some extern will
Found way to your mid hopes, and, like a flame
Within a lucent globe, filled with his beams
Your youthful circling and transparent life?

FIORDIMONDA I am commanded of the Heights Serene,
Where are the blessed and the pure of heart,
Who dwell within the soul of all men's lives,
And swerve to holiest ends, but chief she comes,
Who is the whole supreme of womanhood,

The fire and strength of love, which girds about
The thoughts of men, and moulds and makes them
strong
To do as she may bid; each night she floats
Upon my rousèd sleep, and turns my visions
To mystic song, which shapes myself to her,
And leads me to assume the desperate toil
Of driving out the gloom of the mad plague,
And bringing happiness back again.

ALFARABI Know you
That Death stalks grim before you, and your help
Will melt at his chill breath as flowers are scorched
In the hot Afric winds, or songs of cheer
Die on the lips when the gaunt spectre strides
Across the crackling skies?

FIORDIMONDA Will you believe not?
I am the daughter of the upper light,
I am the Virgin Mother manifest,
I am a hope that is the spirit of hope,
I am the spectre's doomed antagonist.

ALFARABI Even so; I urge no further; astroscope
And prophecy, the words of the fierce monk
Pouring out from his murky cell, and gleams
That visit me at midnight when the stars
Half tell the story, here unite at last;
The world of miracle surrounds the world
Of grosser fact; not to believe the truth,
Formed of the piercing and enveloping spirit,

Were Death indeed; I do obey the will
Of those who have to minister this realm,
Our senses touch but on its outer rim.

FIORDIMONDA What are these sayings vague and under breath?

ALFARABI I will accompany you unto the Duke.

FIORDIMONDA You do a will which is from God above;
Take me with you; when first I saw you come
From the deep wood, wherein so many hours
Have found me holding converse with the saints,
I knew that you were the appointed one
To guide me hence; I watch your kindling eyes,
And understand that in your heart and brain
Like purpose dwells with mine; delay not, then,
But let me start at once. A brief farewell
To those I love far more than my weak life,
And I am ready. Giosue! Giosue!

Giosue appears at the door of the cottage and, seeing the stranger, advances with rapid strides.

GIOSUE What would you, sister? Did you call for me?

FIORDIMONDA Yes, brother dear; I shall fare forth with him,
The wise Alfarabi, whose strange renown
Affrights not me. The sun is not more sure
Than the fulfilment of my many dreams;

Go, bring Susanna, mother, father, all,
I may not tarry.

GIOSUE Are you Alfarabi,
The wizard dark, malign, who rule the land,
And have the Duke fast bound to your firm will,
Caught in the grip of your unhallowed spells,
Even as a prisoner in the dungeon's night?

ALFARABI I have no arts malign nor mystical,
I have the key to some of nature's secrets,
No more, and yet I am Alfarabi.

GIOSUE This is the end of all your moods and whims,
Your wanderings through the mountain aisles and vales,
Your vigils in the night-time, staring stark
Into the lampless blackness; here we see
How far a woman's follies lead her feet
From the true beaten path; go forth with him?
How can you tell but that the demon stands
Invisible behind him, and at word of his
Will thrust his claws into your very soul?
We have too long given range and exercise
To your strange hopes; you shall not stir an inch
From the safe garden bounds.

ALFARABI Hear me, my son;
I have no further contact with the world
Of angels or of spirits than have you.
Trust me that I am better than report,

And rumor does me terrible wrong. I left
The luxuriant regions of my western home
Because of wish expressed by your great Duke
To learn some motions of the silver stars
With clearer answers to deep questions put
To all the visible realm; for I would be
Assistant to the suffering stifled land;
I have not wholly lost my old belief
In the vast miracle which begirds our toils,
And this sweet maiden is perchance the way
Whereby deliverance may descend from Heaven.

FIORDIMONDA Be patient, brother; all your words are vain,
And fall from me as drops of water do
From the tree wet with April's fleeting shower;
My time has come; I shall go forth with him.

Giosue does not remain to hear her expostulations, but runs into the house, and returns in a moment with Pietro, Liza, and Susanna.

ALFARABI My daughter, think not on the Duke alone;
Remember that a mother's wish is far
Beyond all other mandates, and her tears
Are arguments unanswerable.

FIORDIMONDA God's mother
Has wept within me and I am her will.

Pietro, walking slowly and heavily with his staff, approaches Fiordimonda, and looks questioningly towards Alfarabi.

PIETRO In the quick passage of your golden days,
Child of mine elder years, no least restraint
Upon your motions has been needed; you,
Our dearest, fed upon your lonely thoughts,
Which we could comprehend not, trod a path
Which was not for our lesser strength of sight;
You have been joy and light within our doors,
And your more wisdom than our scanty lore
Of seasons and of labors brought us aid
When most we were in darkness; I am fain
To learn what the pale stranger would with you
To snatch you from your peace, and, horrible,
Thrust you into the plague's unpitying jaws.

FIORDIMONDA I have no choice; I am sent unto the toil
By the Divine above.

SUSANNA You shall not stir!
How are you sure but the magician there
Has by his spells brought round you lying dreams,
And voices uttering his unwholesome thoughts
And leading up to this most wretched hour?

FIORDIMONDA The voices that I hear are true as God!

LIZA Be not too swift to act; have you had warning
Of his arrival? Heard you aught which sounded

A firm assurance that the imperative step
Was now at hand?

FIORDIMONDA The hour of God strikes when
His will has reached the point of act.

ALFARABI Kind hearts,
I will pass forth at once; not any word
Has sped from me to push her to the brink
Of this resolve: it may be that the fate
Of the confusèd time lies in her hand;
The stars have sent me hints, obscure and vague,
Of a great change impending; she, too, breathes
Enswathed by white-robed mysteries; yet no man
Can duly measure what the Potencies will;
We must await assurances sun-clear,
And bring our service when our minds inspired
Are filled with cloudless light.

PIETRO No more—no more;
What can a feeble girl amid the whirl
And rush of great contending forces; she dwells
Here in her fields and plucks her simple flowers,
And finds her fancies grow more bright than these;
She is not of our mould, she came to us
A bird of richer plumage, finer song,
And we have never said her nay; but now,
When her mild maiden strength would risk attempt
That boldest men recoil from, I must place
For the first time a father's interdict
Upon this rashness, and deny the deed,

That is mere folly's wildness and can yield
Nothing to light save grief and shallow scorn.

FIORDIMONDA You will unsay the words and let me go!

LIZA Father in Heaven, teach us what is the best.

ALFARABI A mother's heart is ever in the right;
The world lies sleeping there even as a babe
Within its swaying bed beneath the boughs
Of rustling trees and shine subdued with cloud.
Hear the low voice that like an undersong
Flows through the love which glides about the child,
Leaping from thence with splendor to surround
The children of all men and bind in one,
A mystery of flame and joy, all lives,
And, dwelling in them, is their vital throb,
Bringing true help where needed most.

GIOSUE Take her
Away from here, Susanna, and you pass
Out of our eyes back to your sinful town.

ALFARABI I make no longer stay. (*Prepares to go.*)

FIORDIMONDA I must part hence,
Do not abandon me.

PIETRO Be calm, my daughter;
You will forget these tumults, and your peace
Will soon return.

FIORDIMONDA Mother, to you I speak.

LIZA My heart is torn with grief, but let it be;
I hear the anguish calling from afar,
And seem to see the weeping; I am torn
With mine own sorrow and that other woe,
Which is so great and appealing; what am I
To sit here shielded from the scorching sun,
While the parched lips of the dense multitude
Call for one drop of healing coolness? Child,
If you can serve in some weak slender way
And ease the mourning, go, I give you up
Unto that purpose, though I stay and yearn
For your light footstep which returns not, hear
No more your voice's singing when the dusk
Grows with the burning down of the slow sun;
Forth of mine eyes I yield you, but my love
Will be to you wherever you may stray
As the pure air to drink and hearten you,
And God may bring you back with your task done,
And my fain arms may clasp you, and mine eyes,
Warm with sweet tears, behold you, my soul
Flame up anew because of your dear presence.

GIOSUE She moves no pace without me; if it is so
That she fares forth into the city, I
Will be beside her.

LIZA Go, my son, and see
No ill befall her, and in time return
With her.

SUSANNA You too? indeed, this is too much.

She bursts into tears and throws herself into his arms.

ALFARABI The world is saved clothed on with holy love.

PIETRO What more to say? I yield them both and pray
Their light will rise again upon our agèd sight.
Go you, Susanna, fetch her cloak and hood,
And blessèd be her feet who haply brings
Comfort and hope to those long lacking it.

FIORDIMONDA Fear not, my father; surelier than the dawn
I will resume my toils, and, mother blest,
Lie in your arms as in the happy hours
That are not over, but with fairer beams
Will build a sweeter home for us and all.
Farewell, but not a many days shall be,
And I, returned and freed and full of youth,
Will walk with you and part from you no more.

Susanna returns and throws a light cloak about Fiordimonda and places a hood upon her head. Alfarabi leads Fiordimonda and Giosue to the wood; at its opening Fiordimonda turns with the men a little behind her; there is a burst of light from the sun, her white garments and her uplifted face are full in the splendor; Susanna starts forward with raised hands and streaming eyes; Liza falls on her knees in prayer, and Pietro stands, leaning upon his staff, calm and self-contained.

The Curtain Falls.

ACT III.

The private gardens of the Ducal Palace.

The Duke is discovered reclining in a rustic chair; at his feet on the grass lies the jester, Pepe; on his other side a court minstrel with his cittern slung across his back; a man in waiting stands remote from the personages.

It is late in the afternoon.

PEPE Believe me, master, joy is lord of all,
And laughter sits enthroned beyond the clouds;
These are mere dreams that darken all the time,
And fill the air with murmurs; peace and love
Dwell nearer the true centre.

DUKE I have sought
The home of that strange lady, Bliss, and found
The gardens of her kingdom dull with heat,
Monotonous, sad with dying grass and trees,
The landscape monstrous and deformed; I stood
Before her secret dwelling, knocked, there came
No answer save harsh moaning from lorn spaces,
Stretching in a fallen twilight all around me,
Like faint far echoes from despairing souls,
Who had sunk down from their brief height of life
Into the chill abyss of the foredone and lost.

PEPE Yet you had travelled through a maze of joys
To gain that point of sight.
DUKE Even so, my Pepe.
PEPE The bird rests but one moment on the bough,
Swings blithely forward, casts its bead eye up,
When the fair sky is bluest, sings a note
Of sharpest exultation, then is gone
To where a newer blossom loads the air
With fresher perfume. Joy is on the wing,
And dies if severed from its chainless flight.
DUKE Like your own wisdom, Pepe; which to-day
Urges the mere illusion as the heart
Of its own bliss of fitfulness; to-morrow
Your vaunt will be of the contentment clear
That comes of holding fast to well-thumbed things,
Whose power of pleasure grows with usance, yes,
The worst of ills are Change and Death.
PEPE The wise,
Good master, know the secret better far
Than I; to be a fool is but to see
The present moment, which fleets as it rises;
You have the learned who will tell you sure
Where permanency dwells; you grant to me
The dance of mad caprice, that never twice
Restores the colors and the winsomeness
Given the devices perished now and gone.

DUKE Good Pepe, I am little holpen here
Of wise men or of jesters; I perceive
Only the sombre and the lowering fate.

PEPE Fate—fate—what is the word? A sort of ghost,
That gibbers when we let him, but as soon
Flies from our hands when we come near and look
Him in the face. We make him what he is,
And he knows well that all his substance lies
Within our thoughts; so laugh him forth to scorn,
And daylight spreads with chorus of great fires,
Which are sweet music, have we ears to hear;
Master, I drop the mask and bid you hold
The time firm-grasped as an affrighted horse
That will soon yield if boldness loosen not.

DUKE Dear friend, you rode beside my father while
The storm of war roared round our ailing state,
And treason watched at home for the slow sign
To kindle flames where least expected; me
You fondled when, an unrestrainèd boy,
I tumulted at will among the courtiers; now
You comfort me with words that win belief,
Because I would believe them; yet the night
Is over us, and I am half at heart
One with the Frate; we have spurred too far
The patience that makes all the people dumb,
When we command, and for a princely whim

Fly in the face of what they honor most;
Great wrongs have been, and I would learn the way
To undo the evil and its consequences,
Which flourish here like weeds where once were blooms
That Heaven looked down upon with smiles. I will
Not leave the work to others, I will stand
In the forefront of this iniquity,
And slay or fall beside it like a King.

PEPE Ho—ho! look yonder, what is that? Gaze well!

DUKE Nay, I see nothing.

PEPE Panoplied the Past
Rises—the elder Dukes file by in slow
And solemn order—and each shadow throws
Some portion of his fear upon you—see,
Yon are them all at best.

DUKE Or worst, perchance.

PEPE Away with these surmises, good my liege,
Why stands the singer silent,—let us hear!

DUKE Ay so, I would have some clear ditty; sing
The clouds and premonitions down into
The deepest gulfs of sealèd memory.

MINSTREL (*Sings*)

Petals of blossoms afloat on the sea
Whither away, whither away,
Stars that arose on the dark so free,
Dying into the light of day,

Will you return and refashion the rose,
  Will you make fair the new-born night,
Music faltering into its close,
  Will you rebuild your ardors bright?

Hopes that shone in the morning of time,
  Faded now and lost in the gloom,
Lips that murmured and hearts in rhyme,
  Pale and pulseless in latter doom,
Dreams, that glowed like sunrise gold,
  Fled in the storm that burst in the hour,
What far spaces and mid seas hold
  Your grand passion, your joy, your power?

Yonder the rose reblooms and blows,
  Hush! the stars are singing to her,
Thither the dream in swift flight goes,
  Hope, her courier and minister,
Lips flush red and answering hearts
  Hear the music that thrills and lives,
Filling the air from whence departs
  No more the joy that sweet Love gives.

DUKE Mayhap that rose grows in a garden near
And I may learn to pluck it.

Alfarabi enters.

ALFARABI I venture on
Your privacy thus because I bring strange news

And unimagined high desire of Heaven
To assuage our grief and heal our ceaseless ills.

DUKE Your access has the freedom of a friend's,
Who has the heart to do me good and finds
Mine own as sure responsive. Welcome to me
Your eyes and wisdom; here, my hand upon it.

ALFARABI I left the city's noises and its woes
To seek release amid the olive groves
That skirt the misty hills, and, where the woods
Weave their green atmosphere of spells and calms,
Plunged to restore my thought and gain perhaps
Something to help where help is needed most.
I fell upon a garden fair with flowers
That showed a watchful care past peasant wont,
And felt my worn sense touched and half appeased
For the harsh strokes that had so frequent crushed
Its laboring exercise.

SERVANT (*Enters hastily*) Pardon, my lord,
If I approach uncalled, but his demands
Were louder than I dared to disobey.

DUKE May I not have an hour's unshattered talk
With friends in mine own home? Nay—nay—speak on—
The urgence of the horror licenses
These new infringements of our palace laws;
But who is he who clamors thus in rush
To audience when our will is otherwise?

SERVANT The Frate Giacomo.

DUKE I will not see him;
He has been dark with cloud upon our day,
Deepening its gloom when we called loud for light
Of priestly counsel to dispel the shades.
Bid him depart; I have no converse more
With his mad-voiced complaints.

ALFARABI I pray you pause;
In this despair and sinking of all hope
A word may breed such ills that naught may stem
The ruinous tide; the Frate knows not fear,
And the Church Mandate is too vague to give
Firm reason for the closing of his lips
By force of temporal rule; a gentler face
And kindlier ear can harm not you, may lead,
I deem, to good not yet discernible.

DUKE Your hand on my impatience as before;
And yet I marvel what more can be said
About this theme, whereon like broken waves
We have hurled our very hearts, and whence they are thrust
Back into ocean's deep, bleeding and torn.
I see the goodness of your counsel and give way,
Although my weariness is the deep pain
In its excess and height; admit the man,
And all retire except Alfarabi.

Pepe, the Minstrel, and the Servant exeunt.

ALFARABI He may demand close
conference.

DUKE That I grant not;
I am too worn with these recurring scenes,
And grief so dwells in me without surcease
That I must have your wisdom's guidance, stay.

The Frate approaches the Duke, who receives him quietly but coldly.

DUKE I am not wholly pleased to find that you
Intrude upon my short-lived hours of ease,
When I would have release from deepening cares
The suffering State brings on me; what have you
Of fresh intelligence or crescent sight
Answerable to the boldness of this plea
For further interview? Has not been said
The all that may be? And I think it well
To listen to the voice of Holy Church,
Who little sanctions your commixture rash
With great affairs, that are not the behoof
Of sheltered cloisters and the dream-like thoughts
Of men, spending their hours on worn black tomes
And vain pursuit of fine-spun mysteries.
I held you for my friend and am not free
From pangs your disaffection brought; be brief,
And let me have your message whole at last.

FRA GIACOMO There is no boldness in my presence here;
Had I witheld myself from words that burn
Within me to their utterance leaping high,
I had been bold beyond the wont of those
Who fear one only thing, to leave undone
The act that is the centre of their lives.
I have no pleasure in the part I play,
I have no longing for the thrust and stroke,
The caution and the gaining vantage grim,
Which make the secular joy of lordly men;
The silence of the cell and voice of prayer
Feed my rapt heart more surely, and the grief
Of severed hands and minds no more at one
Furrows its way not through your soul alone.

DUKE No time for compliments nor personal pangs;
Take the sheer forthright way to your desire,
And leave me not in doubt what more the crowd
Would din into mine ears of risen whim
And rousèd hopes, best left in their dim sleep.

FRA GIACOMO You can have changed not in these latter hours,
Few and unhappy, which have made a bar
Betwixt your soul and mine; you yet are kind
And winsome-hearted to all life which speeds
And pours around you; to that self I speak,
Whose love for pomp grew not with passing days,

But knew the hollowness and felt the sting
Of misused chances, and found wretchedness
Seated upon the world's most regal throne
Which had no care for the sure weal and joy
Of the unshepherded multitude.

DUKE I pray
You leave these vain appeals, and bring me close
Unto the deed which claims your presence here.
I have been blinded in a mist of words
So long, and felt the bitter coldness strike
My cheek with constant iteration, I
Have lost the immediate sense of their just import;
Now at my need I loosen my caught soul
From mesh of flatteries, look truth in the face,
And crave at once your will.

ALFARABI The time to plead
Seems over, Frate; what is now to do?

FRA GIACOMO The world is sick even to the verge
of death;
The spectre glooming in our sunless skies,
And the wild plague ruining through all our streets,
Are but the index and the symbol grim
Of deeper-placed disease. The spirit of life,
The motive and the inner might which dwells
Within the nation, is self-severed, war
Thunders across those spaces of high thought,
And brother's hand is raised against his brother;
The populace is crushed beneath the heel

Of sordid luxury, and they reel in swound
That is unlamped of aught save impulse fierce
To rid them of the hideous misery;
The loftier manhood, which should see for them
The upward path to greater health and peace,
Sits at the feast and shuts its heavy doors
Against the night that roars with furious storms;
So Life is blinded, and just Faith calls forth
From grinding agony for sight of God,
Who answers not, but all is blankness where
His love shone forth in elder days as sun,
Giving intenseness to the subtle act
Which is in each man the extreme of being,
The verge where he is joined with the Divine.
The friendship of the high must clasp again
The outstretched joyance of the lower, the twain,
Now parted in the sore defeat of both,
United in a vital bond, which makes
The vision possible and the true success.

ALFARABI This have we seen with no less poignant sight,
And seek with you to bring from realm of thought
Into the world of fact and use; what means
Not often scanned in our perplexed discourse
Have you to-day, what reasoned plain device
To make the dreamed of real?

DUKE Words, mere words;

The time is past when incantations strange
Stayed the hot fever in the blood, or songs
Woven mystically changed the crazed brain
To a true motion and desirable.

FRA GIACOMO Be not so lost in your unhealthful calm;
A little light may show the dizzying feet
And clutching hands enough to gain the point
Where the floods pour of imminent radiance.

DUKE You hold the taper; let it burn and flame.

FRA GIACOMO Friendship must come again to rule mankind;
The forceful blood which stops within the veins
Must learn to flow again with swiftness; power
Must give itself to those who are its props,
And the dumb eyeless masses have for help
The insight of the noblest; thus the life,
Which now is shattered in a mortal mad divorce,
Healed wondrously with deeper finer strength,
Will know the wholeness which is God himself,
And Truth so long veiled in the mists of search
Will blaze above the illumined mountain tops.

ALFARABI Our Mother Church no doubt has sent you word
Of her more inward purpose; you have come
Her messenger plenipotentiary, clothed
In her dark awfulness of revelation,
Heaven's mandate voiced in eloquence,

God's heart of mercy yearning to restore
The prodigals to his arms; or do you speak
Your sole grave wisdom, dreams, or what you will,
That hover round your bed when sleep is not
And waking knows not if it dream or wake?

FRA GIACOMO I am obedient to the voice of Pope and Church,
I am a part of that strong royalty,
And hold the great authority thereof;
The message enters ears attuned aright
Though they be lowly; and the Church finds truth
In much her humbler servants proffer; here
I am so closely allied unto the arising fact
That I am given the privilege to say
What must get lodgement where the verdict lies
Of truth irrefragable; you stray not far
Who follow in my footsteps.

ALFARABI Yet I fear
The precipice whereby you stand; I hold
A view of justice not unlike your own;
But I am not as clear how well to trust
The faculty within me; lest I fall
Broken upon the rocks foam-clad below,
Mistaking self for the just will of all.

FRA GIACOMO Some act must be; we can no more be still
And watch mere Death swoop down on us.

DUKE Indeed?

FRA GIACOMO Let the hurt people choose who shall be first
In power upon them; princedoms lose their right
When the chief good for which they toil and live
Transforms itself for them into a base
Whereon they build their pleasure halls.

ALFARABI My lord,
Here is again the vaunted daringness
We found within our brother; hear no further
Wild folly garbed in strange religion's fervors.

FRA GIACOMO I but repeat what I have said before
Within the rich cathedral's painted walls,
Or boldly to the assembled court, when last
Our futile conference called the spectre forth
From his dull lair in the unfathomed skies.

DUKE Now this is quite a part of the shimmering dream;
I will hear all; what else have you to bring
Of marvels from the shores no ship may touch
Save your strange soul?

FRA GIACOMO The Change fills all men's hearts;
A New Republic dwells within their thoughts,
Allures unto it all their longings deep,
Promises living interplay where now
Is Death, the symbol of the ruin fallen
On men's best aspirations, and their wills

Languid, once filled with fire; give you not way,
The wheels of its sure triumph must crush down
Your mimicry of strength, and heed not much
What lies beneath them; meet the nearing doom,
And place yourself as leader of the host,
You may not wholly lose the suave delights
Which you seem loth to yield; then may return
The government of the noble and the joy
Which makes all hearts akin, and fills with light
The invigorated commonweal.

DUKE You fly
Afield; I would the popular good; your schemes
I fear hold forth small likelihood of success.

FRA GIACOMO Join hands with me as in the elder time,
Give ear to my poor words, and know my heart
Longs but for your high welfare; be a prince
Whose people dwells within him, nor storms there
In outer darkness, 'gainst his luminous towers,
That are a cauldron of base passion's whirls,
Not reason's shining forth benignant.

DUKE Light?
Speak you of light, and find it where the rays
Are dimmest, in the mad convulsive cries
Of the untutored rabble, or their brains
In whom flare fires which you have lit of hate
For those who love them most? Know, worthy sir,
We too will see that the lost good is brought

Back unto us, but your impossible means
Of vulgar choice, or senseless roaring hot
From ignorant throats, we have nor lot nor share in,
We seek more precedent, and our neighbor thrones
Will aid us in our swift-developing plans;
When we have need, we shall not fail to call
Your wide-illustrious wisdom to our side.

FRA GIACOMO I fail again to lead you to the pitch
Of self-forgetfulness which constitutes
Our manhood, and in lack of which the day
Looks not on sorrier creatures; fare you well,
If you yet may, who place your feet on path
Which leads you know not whither, and whereon
Shines not one flame kindled of the blest skies,
But fires of hell burn to mislead, and clothe
Their falsity in radiance semblable
To what they mean not. Now the war bursts forth,
A universal storm, a mixture dire
Of all the winds, and not one quarter stays
Without its menace of your calm; beware
The wrath unbounded of the wronged, whose hearts
Have known the smouldering of their pent-up hate
For weary days; I have no more to urge,
And bid you make your peace with the roused will
Of the insurgent people; yonder Death
Must be appeased, and it may be in blood;
Victim on victim have the altars had,
The mist of women's tears has risen to him

Appealingly, the anguished cries of men
Have swept on high as bitter prayers, but nought
Has been propitiatory; look you to it;
When the hour strikes that his dark need demands,
Your pallor may discover what will ease
His hunger, and your shrivelled lips may feel
What thirst dwells in the sufferer's tortured mouth!

DUKE And this is all? Alfarabi, dear friend,
Lead forth the hopeless man; we have enough;
Our olden friendship binds us still; the door
Stands wide; but you, remember well no more
To mar our peace with your unthoughted clamors.

Servants appear during the last speech of the Frate's and lead him out of the Duke's presence.

ALFARABI The troubles of the time have flawed his brain;
He understands not what he thinks or says—
Peace to him—a soul fallen from its pedestal,
And writhing painfully to its end.

DUKE True, true,
A great wise man,—the pity of it all—
Speak not thereof—I would forget this hour,
And gain the strength I need for what is near.

ALFARABI I crave your Grace's ear for a brief tale
Which the sad Frate's tumult broke upon,
And left half uttered on my lips.

DUKE I bear
In mind your absence mid the hills; you had
Perchance some small adventure?

ALFARABI Great, my lord;
And full of promise did it seem to me.

DUKE Proceed.

ALFARABI You have heard no doubt of rumors strange,
Telling of a young girl inspired of Heaven
To be a helper in our large distress,
And instrument of the Virgin for our good?

DUKE I have some recollection of the story,
Brought to mine ears I know not how. So much
Floats on the winds in these disturbing hours,
I can give heed barely to half that speeds
And knocks against the gates of sense.

ALFARABI I found
In my unmotived sojourn the white maiden,
I listened to her pleading, saw her eyes
Suffused with ardor for the general good,
Remembered the stern Frate's prophecies,
And weird disclosures read in planets vague,
Came under the swift potence of her voice
And eager tears, felt that help lay in her,
And could not utter nay unto her wish.

DUKE I do not apprehend; what wish had she
Which hung on your fulfilment?

ALFARABI She would stand
Before your highness as her mission bids,
Borne into her still heart each night
By mystic guests from Heaven.

DUKE Nay, let it be
Until another sun; I would not rouse again
To-day the passions laid asleep.

ALFARABI She waits
Within my call and is a simple girl,
Whose tender accents breathe of the fresh fields,
And the clear mountain passes where the sun
Makes joyance and the soul leaps free from care.

DUKE Do you desire that I receive her?

ALFARABI I do,
My lord.

DUKE Then be it so; but brief must pass
The interview, for I need rest, and dusk
Will fall ere many minutes wing their flight.

ALFARABI Your highness has not seen her like before.

Exit.

DUKE More miracles and confusions find their way
Into the space we inhabit than have been
The appanage and appurtenance of mankind
Since the old days when angels walked with us,
And God spoke as a friend gives counsel safe
To one in sharp distress. Conjectures wild

And manifold darken men's hopes and hearts,
Who gazing on the natural course of things,
And, full of passions, see these as dim ghosts,
Or splendid with a purpose not their own,
Being lent them by the dreamers. I marvel much
Why my wise Arab so far yields himself
To the upheavals of the anguish sore
Which moans in all our streets, and trusts a girl,
Whose counsel can have relevance to our needs
As little as mine own, who grope and find
No outlet from the hardening sorrow's wall,
Built round us by the malice of base fate,
Beckoning dark Death to hurl us down the steep,
Where climbing upward is impossible.
We all are from our wits, I shrewdly doubt,
And drift to the abyss. There, they approach,
And we shall make acquaintance with the maid.

Alfarabi enters leading Fiordimonda; they are accompanied by Giosue.

ALFARABI See there the Duke who is prepared to hear you.

DUKE Whence come that bearing and those perceant eyes,
Which read me through and through? From Heaven indeed
Proceeds such purity, and her firm look
Assures her triumph. Can it be that God

Through her would place his finger on the spot
Where we are suffering deepest, and the touch
Will be instinct with healing? Tremble not,
Dear maiden, I have heard of your great wish
To bring sweet comfort to the saddened hearts
Who weep within our city.

FIORDIMONDA I am here
To do your will and aid as you command.

DUKE Alack! my child, what aid is there in me?
Had such there been, I long ago had thrust
The bold intruder from our yawning gates,
I long ago had brought the roses back
To cheeks which are as pale as the white blooms
That rest within the stiffened hands of Death.

FIORDIMONDA It will be given me to find a way
Whereby to bring the vanished peace once more
Into your dwelling, and disperse the glooms
That over-shadow now.

DUKE I dare refuse
No help which holds forth any dimmest hope
Of forcing Death upon the heartless Death
Who has us in his clutches; yet I pause,
And bid you think of all the ruined, grim,
And hideous scene into the which you go;
You are too young, and your unstainèd dream
Of life must have no contact with the dire
And wordless needs that welter there.

FIORDIMONDA Great Duke,

I come not of myself; an impulse bears
Me forward far too strong for Death.

GIOSUE Let me return with her; she is a child
Filled with a vain desire; be harsh to her
If need be, but save her, I pray.

DUKE Even so;
His counsel rings of wisdom; take her hence,
And bring her gently to her mother's eyes.

FIORDIMONDA It may not be; I can retrace no step
That led me hither; you must grant me grace
To meet the fate appointed me. Death, too,
May have his will of me, but the sharp edge
Of his own knife is whetted keen for him.

ALFARABI Take her unto you; let no chance escape.

DUKE The time is wild with portents; what am I
To know them or decipher their blurred script
Of possible hope; I bend within the storm
As a tree broken in the last mad gale;
Let it be as she wills, but she moves not
One inch from these close grounds without your guard,
Alfarabi, or mine; God show the right!

As he finishes, the apparition appears in the western skies, dark and prominent against the final gold of the sunset. Alfarabi points to it in dismay, and the Duke exclaims despairingly. Fiordimonda turns in the direction of their movements, and Giosue looks on it white with fear.

ALFARABI Fix your eyes on your strange antagonist,
He has come forth at your rash challenge.
GIOSUE Leave
Sister, leave this accursèd spot with me!
DUKE Delay no single instant; mingle not
The current of your youth with our despair;
It cannot be much longer that the doom
Hangs thus above us; we may not escape,
And tread the path unto the ragged verge;
But you have nought to do with our past lives,
The deed recoils not on your golden head,
Go forth with your kind brother, dear my child,
And think not of us more.
FIORDIMONDA Nay, what is it
That you behold so weird and terrible?
ALFARABI Yonder, in the far sky.
FIORDIMONDA I see the fire
Of the descending sun; its splendor grows
Into a sea of molten light; yea, there,
Within its deep the Mother floats, and smiles,
The light is of her giving, and her hand
Is raised in holy blessing; on her arm
She bears the King of all the worlds; around
Them kneel the Potencies that guide and lead
Past pain and fear; lo, yonder there is nought
But sunshine and pure love.

DUKE Oh, there is more,
Look upward fixedly, lend all your gaze.

FIORDIMONDA Nay, good my lord, I see not otherwise.

She does not drop her eyes but remains mute and in a rapt ecstasy; the Duke lays his hand heavily on the shoulder of Alfarabi, whose face lights up with a singular look of wonder and hope.

The Curtain Falls.

ACT IV.

The Rooms of Fiordimonda in the palace. There is a wide door at the back hung with curtains. Giosue, looking around him cautiously, parts the portière and enters.

GIOSUE Where can she be? They keep her secluded, as if she were a real Princess and not a peasant girl from the mountains. Now I certainly will see her, and have her go back with me. A pretty adventure this is, indeed; what do they mean to do with her? Of course, I understand nothing of their fine words and awful talk about the plague and the dreadful figure I saw in the skies; or was it only a shape in the clouds such as you often find there, and change into anything you please? I know not, and I am not for cudgeling my poor brains about it; strange that Fiordimonda perceived nothing of it, when all the rest of us had our wits set awry by it. No harm has as yet come of it to us, and I steer clear of the crowds in the street, and begin to be quite courageous for me. They let me walk about the palace as I wish, but they keep Fiordimonda away from me, and that I am not going to stand any longer. I am sure these are her rooms.

SUSANNA (*Peering from behind the curtains*) May I follow you? I am all of a tremble; I ran up the marble stairs and thought there was some one after me.

GIOSUE Why should you be afraid? I am here, and that ought to be enough. They consider me a privileged person, let me tell you, and any company I bring is welcome. I live here now. Walk in, and we will wait for Fiordimonda. Let us look about the rooms, we may find her somewhere.

Susanna enters on tiptoe, stops to look around her, takes a few further steps, stops again, and expresses the greatest astonishment in her face and attitude. At last she runs up to Giosue and seizes him violently by the arm.

SUSANNA O Giosue, how marvellous a place! This is what a palace is like! Do you suppose it is all real, or will it vanish like a dream before we are aware? Do they have soldiers to punish people whom they do not want?

GIOSUE Why will you forget that I am here? Now do not hang upon me in that way! There! (*He kisses her*) Is that what you were after? Be calm like me. It was good of them to send you when my message reached them. I met Cristofero in front of the palace, and he promised to have some one from home here to-day. But who brought you?

SUSANNA Who brought me? He who left me at the appointed place and is to return for me.

GIOSUE Well, who is it anyhow? Not that it matters much, now that you are here, but still I should not mind being told. Who brought you?

SUSANNA Why who should bring me except my father?

GIOSUE Your father? Is the sky going to fall? I sat out in the garden last night, and everywhere I saw stars shooting around me as if they were mad. I am afraid poor Fiordimonda is mad, and I am sure that the black-robed Arabian magician is mad enough for a ship-load of pirates starved more than a twelvemonth, and the young sad-eyed Duke has at least one part of his head turned mad, the part which has to do with his heart on his left side, for he moans something like Francesca—you remember—who died last year of too much blood—and now you talk like a mad thing of your father as if ever to our knowledge you had had one—and I am wild-mad—what with my being kept here, when I am anxious to go to my mother, and our Fiordimonda being shut up so that I hunt for her without success. In fact the whole world is mad.

SUSANNA (*Throwing herself into a great chair from which she immediately leaps up*) I am afraid to sit in it—I suppose nobody ever does. I think the floor must be very cold with nothing but those gorgeous carpets to cover the marble here and there.

GIOSUE What has that to do with your father? If you do not tell me about him at once, I will call the soldiers.

SUSANNA That is hardly necessary. They will come soon enough, and sure enough, and then we shall have to answer for being in a forbidden place. Still how do you imagine I ever got here? Some one had to look after me, and there is nobody better than a father.

GIOSUE Why do you keep me waiting in this ungodly way? Is not Fiordimonda my sister? No one will dare to touch us if she forbids him. I meant to ask them to let me speak to her, and I see no reason why they should keep her away from me; but to go back to your father—what has happened anyway?

SUSANNA It is a long story, and I do not believe I will tell you a word of it, until you take me away and back into the garden. My father told me that he would go home again in an hour or so, and I would rather wait for him out under the trees than here, which is too fine a place for me, and frightens me because I am sure that we shall be caught, and then what will happen? O Giosue, you always lead me into mischief, and I have the worst time in getting out of it. Mayhap they will keep us as they are keeping Fiordimonda, and father will wait and wait and wait for me, and I shall not

come, and there is no end of the trouble you put me to, O Giosue, Giosue, Giosue.

GIOSUE O Susanna, Susanna, Susanna, if you begin to cry, I will just yell at the top of my lungs, and rouse every person within a mile of us. You were the first to say that we were to come when I told you that I thought I knew the way to Fiordimonda's room, and you gave me no peace, since you were so eager to see her. I have no reason to be afraid anyway; I am housed in the palace, too; it is a long ways from where we are, but why should I not come up and talk to my sister? They can only send us back faster than we came—they will not harm us, I know.

SUSANNA Did you not tell me that you were forbidden to visit Fiordimonda without some one coming to take you to her? O what shall we do? I want to see Fiordimonda, and I must not disappoint father. Take me away, Giosue, I cannot remain another moment.

The sound of an opening door is heard; they convulsively clasp hands and run to the entrance, where they see Fiordimonda, who walks a few steps towards them.

GIOSUE There she is now, Susanna. I am sure I told you just how it would be!

FIORDIMONDA O Susanna, darling, you have been in my thoughts all the morning, and I have wanted

to talk to you, and I longed to hear of mother and every one of you; and, Giosue, you brought her in spite of the strange way they keep you far from me. I am almost ready to take you by the hand and escape from the dreadful task which has been given me, but that would be a vain and foolish thing, indeed. Come here, Susanna, and talk as fast as you can, we may be disturbed at any minute. It will soon be all over, and I shall go back, and we shall be so happy, so happy.

SUSANNA Our mother sits at the door, and looks out over the grove and wonders at what moment you will advance from the shadow and run up to her; but when your father raps on the floor with his stick, and roams about the room uneasily and stumblingly, she takes him by the arm and leads him to a chair and tells him that her prayers are answered daily, that she has news of you, that you were right to do what you have undertaken, and that we shall be filled with wonder at what will come to pass very soon. Then your father grows silent, and by and by he seems to awaken from a kind of dream, and he calls for Giosue, until he notices the tears welling up into mother's eyes, and he gets up and goes out into the garden; do not remain here, Fiordimonda, there is no one around at present, we will return together, and think no more of the dark and sinful city.

FIORDIMONDA Speak not so, Susanna; I may not stir from the palace. If I could only have them with me, I should be far stronger, and my heart would be freer to finish what I have begun. I am indeed well, as mother must know, and I am strengthened by her prayers rising for me, and floating around me in a manner that is sure but is hard to understand. Yet I would have them near, and in whatever befalls I would be within reach of their hands and comfort. I feel that the end towards which I am striving is not far off, and the deed will come to light which will vanquish the plague and the invisible monster; for do you know, Susanna, that I have never been able to see, as the others do, the strange figure that walks the skies over the city and fills all souls with terror and suffering.

GIOSUE I am half ready to think that there is no such monster, and I believe that, if the gloomy wizard had not been by to confuse me, I should not have seen anything either.

SUSANNA Oh, now I think of it! I can manage to have my father take your mother and father in his cart, and bring them here to see you, Fiordimonda; you will know how to manage it.

FIORDIMONDA I have not been refused anything, and they must realize how much it is to me, and how much happier I shall be, and how much better prepared for what is to come; but your father, Susanna,

what father have you except ours, who loves you as he does Giosue and me.

GIOSUE You are on the right track now, Fiordimonda, just make her out with it! She teases me until I am prepared to do something desperate. She has a great deal of news but she keeps it back so as to get us more and more excited.

FIORDIMONDA No, Giosue, she has been greatly moved by the strange events which have rushed so fast upon each other, but she withholds nothing willingly.

SUSANNA I have been trying to tell him all the time, but he is so restless and interrupts me so, and makes such an ado about every little thing, that I have been hardly able to keep my wits together.

GIOSUE Do you hear all that, Fiordimonda? You know a great deal better. I have tried to fix her mind on just that one matter for the past hour, and when I believe I have her, she is off again in some tremble about nothing. Go on at once with your story.

FIORDIMONDA She will when you stop talking. Sit down over there, and be quiet for a little while.

SUSANNA The day after you left us, Fiordimonda, while we were sitting in the garden, and talking about Giosue and you, and wondering where you were and what you were doing, a stranger came along with good old Father Fillippo, and, led by the

priest, walked straight up to father—our father—your father—and took him by the hand, and shook it strongly, and thanked him over and over again, and then he went up to mother and did the same, and he began to speak wildly about having returned from long voyages, and he rushed over to me and tried to hug and kiss me. I fought him off, and Father Fillippo stood there and laughed till his hat fell from his head, but in a few minutes he took hold of the man, and quieted him, and soon he told us about it, how my mother died, and my father was to go away on one of his long trips, because he was a sailor, and how, without saying anything to the priest, he made up his mind to leave me on your doorstep—they lived some miles away and were new in the place and had heard how good and charitable you all were. So he had made up his mind, and expected to be back before long, and tell about what he had done, and claim me again, but he had a great many strange accidents and adventures, and he was in far wild countries; when he finally was able to return, the years had passed, but his chief wish was to find out what had become of me, and he went to Father Fillippo and made a clean breast of his action, and now I have a father, and he has brought back gold, and bought a farm, and he drove me out to town in our cart, and I knew where to find Giosue, and am here with you, sister dear.

GIOSUE I have more to add to that; we are to be married, Susanna and myself, when the ghost goes back to the place where those thin slim things live, and you, sister, are at home again.

FIORDIMONDA What a secret you are telling me, Giosue. We never guessed it, and mother was wondering whether you ever meant to be a real man; I am sure she will be greatly surprised.

GIOSUE You think she has had suspicions?

FIORDIMONDA You must ask her that. He is a good boy, Susanna, and you will be happy together.

SUSANNA We have a new cart, and a brave little horse, and we will bring mother and Father Pietro to see you—to-morrow—to-morrow—we can do it.

FIORDIMONDA Oh, do it, be sure to do it!

A servant appears at the door.

SERVANT The Duchess directs me to say that she will be here to visit you in a short time.

FIORDIMONDA I am anxious to see her.

The servant exit.

SUSANNA What sort of a lord is that?

GIOSUE He is no lord at all; his business is to mind Fiordimonda. But we must go now, and I want to meet Susanna's father.

FIORDIMONDA Good-bye—good-bye—and do not forget your promise.

Giosue and Susanna exeunt.

FIORDIMONDA I would the work were done; I am not here
So close to the great voices as amid
My wind-enamored trees. I am indeed
The outer clamor of the people set
Within this splendor; when I saw the towers
Of the fair city loom upon my sight—
At intervals in sooth I had been there,
And trod its streets with pleasant wonderment—
I felt at once the fervor of my task;
Child of the people, born of those who toil,
And make superb delights the property
Of the choice few, tossing the wine from lips
Unthinking of the endless grief and pain
That wrung its sharpness from the grape, lo! I
Am here to take this glory, and impart
Its brightness unto all who seek and long,
Even as the mid-day sun sheds forth its glow
Equally to the illumined quarters four
Of the wide sky. The Father loves his sons
With the same ardor, greatest as the least,
And hungers over them, and burns to bring
Them all around his knee, beneath his smile,
And hear their words in answer to his own.
Now this shall surely come to pass through me,
All the great dreams that forced me on the Labor
Shall grow to fact, and the unresting Love

That is beneath men's lives shall shine in them
As never in the dead years past and gone.
You Shape of Death, that haunt the darkened air,
And whom I know but as the fire and light
Of the dear Father's glory there above,
Take me unto you, let me be a sacrifice,
I would diffuse myself unto your rays,
That so these may become as balm to them
Who thirst for life, and sink from lack of it,
I would transform you to a stream of hope,
Flowing where all is dark and arid now,
Making the heart again divine with joy!

The Duchess enters.

DUCHESS I wish to have some converse with you, sweet,
Whose coming here has been so gently strange;
Remain there on the cushion low beside me;
Your golden hair is more a crown to you
Than any jewelled marvel princes wear
In token of a power not always used
For noblest purposes. When I was young
My haughty spirit held itself above
The moods of lesser strain, and I wore crowns
That challenged the fierce sunlight, but, dear girl,
My griefs have made me humbler, and I place
My hand upon this royal head of gold
And like a suppliant kneel for help and comfort.

FIORDIMONDA The crowns of every world are but the deeds
Love does for those who are in sorrow, those
Who cling unto the mountain steep and climb,
And wearied fall upon the barren rocks,
Or perish half in sight of the high vales
Where gleams the wished-for city of deep peace.
I would do what I can; I am borne on
By a swift current whose far end and outlet
I see mixed with the ocean's glorious waves.
Indeed, your eyes have not been free from tears,
Your brow too tells of vanquished grief and pain,
You know the heart's deep secrets, you are wise
And loftily good, you will be at my side,
When the great trial comes.

DUCHESS Beseech you, dear,
Have no such thought of me. My prayers arise
Unto the golden saints in the mid heaven,
But are not answered like to yours. My spirit
Grew strong in the luxuriance of a pride
Which held itself of such high price and cost
That none was even second; what knew I
Of peasants moiling in the blistering sun,
Or toilers starving in our busy streets?
When I rode forth, despair slunk to its holes,
And the mock blossoms of a loyalty
That hid its hatred under forcèd smiles
Strewed my unconscious path; now that the storm

Roars round my peace, and grief has given me eyes
To understand the soul of womanhood,
And penetrate the mother's heart though clothed
In shameful rags for which I am to blame,
My life uprises like an accusing dream
And glooms around me in dire punishment.
I am bewildered, and I strive to find
Where yet there may be hope.

FIORDIMONDA In God's own time;
The hour has not yet struck, but it is near.
The thought of man in wisdom rives the dark
And prophesies; and woman must have faith
And leave not off her gazing; thus I am
Assured that goodness will renew its reign,
And the past sorrow be but as a stair
To lead us to the highest; when one believes
In the great light that masks itself in gloom
Only to burst forth brighter, round him sweeps
The vast concourse of souls, and from these falls
A secret power upon his eyes to cleanse
And give an ancient strength, and the rent skies
Show what is far above them, love and good,
Laboring to fill the outstretched troubled world,
And peace that noblest is of all. O Faith,
We will not falter, you are our Mother dear,
We hide our faces in your mystic robes,
And our sharp tears are quenched beneath your touch.

DUCHESS Would that the time were here; meanwhile I dread
What every unknown moment may bring forth.
I was not always thus; I looked far out
Upon the moving seas, and hailed the ships
Coming from whatso strangest lands and freighted
With whatso cargoes in sheer ardency;
I faced the future without fear and held
Myself beyond the keen emergency to force it
Into my aims and make it part of me;
But now I sit like any woman, weak
And apt at tears, and clutch the present joy,
And will not let it go, and peer about
As though the next hour meant my doom.

FIORDIMONDA What fear
Can harbor in your soul? Have you not lived
In the high realm of pure and holy love,
Where the base passions may not draw their breath?

DUCHESS I have been proud, and would not soil myself
With aught that was less than the crystalline
And perfect truth of being; I was brave
Because I thrust away whatever spoke
In words less noble than the noblest; yet
I see that I believed myself the one
Who of those active in the mighty world
Alone was good transcendently; and so

My goodness fails me in my time of need,
I spurn myself because I am too weak
To yield what now is not mine own, but falls
To those who have the strength to give to all
Of their loved inmost and their best.

FIORDIMONDA What end
Shines in these utterances, as through a long
And arching avenue of trees the red and gold
Of early sunrise may glow forth and lure
The lingering footstep?

DUCHESS When some days agone
I stood before the people, and their cries
Rung in mine ears for justice and for help,
I bore myself a princess, for I saw
How the complete and wealthy truth of time
Had poured through soul of my grave ancestors
And coursed within me now. I would not yield,
But thought in their dull brains surged bitterness
Of momentary pain, which had no edge
From conscious loss of height and dignity,
But was the agony of flesh torn by the thorns
Of denser pathways than the wont? It was
A barbarous and a sad mistake.

FIORDIMONDA Alack!
It seems that you have worn across your heart
A jewelled splendor, which lay hard and heavy
Upon its natural beatings; free yourself,
You will know mounting to your happier brain

A blood that differs in no tint and might
From what suffuses every purgèd thought.

DUCHESS I wear that robe no longer; I would be
Even as the woman brown and burned with sun.

FIORDIMONDA Be sure you leave no place unfilled that calls
On you for usance.

DUCHESS Nay, my day is past.

FIORDIMONDA Your sun shines fair above the tremulous edge
Where rising day leaves night with all her stars
To bring another round of other hopes
Upon the soul.

DUCHESS I have to take upon me
A dreary burden of undoing; tear
Asunder bonds I wove in ignorant joy,
And knew not how I should be clipped, confined,
When most I needed freedom.

FIORDIMONDA Why believe
The distant palace in the misty hills,
And wanderings through the grassy mountain clefts,
Or listening to the viewless bird-songs when
The morning glows pure white above you will
Give liberty more surely than to remain
Amid the tumult, and, if need be, die
Where duty bids you stand and murmur not?

DUCHESS I am too feeble, broken with my grief,

And thought no longer urges with the power
Of earlier aspirations; unto you
The victory belongs; the heavens have opened,
Their light is day within the yellow day,
And a new era grows from cloud and storm
Into clear sovereignty of all the sky;
I take you for the God-appointed strength
To make the transformation, bring a new
Embodiment of the old truth to sight,
And change the form of man's created world;
And we will go, my anguished son and I,
Unto our peace, from whence we may behold
The rising state we knew not how to build.
I pray you urge upon his yielding soul
Consent to this best plan; Alfarabi,
And the gray counsellors who stand at need
Before the people, and the bitter priest
(I would have banished him but the good Duke
Thought danger was sea-hidden from the realm)
Will circle you, and wisdom make a weal
Where now is Death.

FIORDIMONDA Such close to our despairs
The Voice Celestial promises, but not
Without your best connivance, and your touch
Upon it, as the fingers of the spring
Play round the blossom petals and the leaves
Unto a miracle of issue.

The Duke enters.

DUCHESS Son,
I have had pleasant conference with the maid;
And leave you to question her much further. You
Will lead him to the quiet which is right,
And forth from these grim shadows of a doom
That must soon slay if they be lifted not.

FIORDIMONDA I will speak as it may be given me.

The Duchess exit. The Duke seats himself and Fiordimonda remains standing at some distance from him.

DUKE Will you not come and stay beside me here?

FIORDIMONDA I am your humble servant, good my lord.

DUKE Then you will do my will.

FIORDIMONDA Nay, let me stand
And hear what you would have of me.

DUKE Indeed
It ill becomes me to command who look
For help and guidance from your clearer mind,
Fulfilled of the white light of God.

FIORDIMONDA I am
Constrained of higher powers to bring again
The vanished peace unto the land.

DUKE Even that;
Peace dwells where you are as an atmosphere,
Surrounds you as a sea of molten gold,
Soft, generous, hopeful, raying life and joy;

I well believe that you were sent to me
To teach me where we fail in act and thought,
And so ensoul the state with purer strength,
Driving out sin most harmful.

FIORDIMONDA What I know
Is not mine own; I listen and I hear
The voices speaking low within me.

DUKE Voices!
What need you more than that one inward song,
Which is your being and as fine and sweet
As any angel's of them all?

FIORDIMONDA The heart
Is weak, and deals but with the pictures vain
Of an unreal world save the great Truth
Sounds through it, taking it thus on high.

DUKE Since
when
Heard you these murmurs deep and strange, that are
You say from the great world within the world,
As the strong heart gives force to every limb
And moulds and governs it.

FIORDIMONDA I cannot tell;
I found myself a dreamy girl who is
Not useful in the daily toils as others are,
And mourned my weakness, for my mother old
Needed my strength as hers grew less with age.
I shed my tears in silence, labored hard,
Strove to shut out my visions and became

Her welcome prop and stay; then I was glad
And hoped that nought would mar my simple calm,
And thought my prayers were answered.

DUKE Voices broke
Upon that interval, and sent you forth
To larger undertakings?

FIORDIMONDA When the gloom
Deepened of the great plague and sorrow here,
I was assailed by dream on nobler dream;
They came to me by night and day, and I was brought
Into this house by ways miraculous.

DUKE You are a worker of sweet miracles
Far more and other than you deem, perchance.

FIORDIMONDA I shall do what I can.

DUKE Then hear me speak;
When first I saw you, the chief miracle
Was wrought, the wonder that occurs in hearts
Lowly or high as the fresh morning bursts
Upon them joyous; time has no part in it,
And the one instant binds them close as years
Of dull and droning questionings; arisen
Into the realm of right and light, where each
Is as the centred sun unto the other,
The mid of the fair world each plays in turn
So that its life is known but as it thrills

Back from the other's looks and deeds. I saw
In you what woman never roused in me,
And dare to say your deepest being rings
In concord with mine own, for the strange strength
Of the experience lies but in response
Which each gives unto each. That ecstasy
Leaps up in souls who breathe in unison
And may not otherwise.

FIORDIMONDA You trouble me.
A surging sea sweeps over my rapt heart,
A wild possession that I know not well;
Since I have been within these halls, and heard
You speak to me as was not my poor wont
Amid my simple friends, I have been torn
By pains and joys that leave me dark and cold,
Not overcome with a serene assurance
As when I dreamed a little week ago.
I have called on the angel visitants,
Who love to throng the circle of my soul
And float across the field of sight which is
Within, but the new messages I hear
Ring other than before, and now you stir
A host of murmurs, sounds which rise and grow
About me, but no full-ordered song, no clear
And conquering melody.

DUKE Listen you to it,
Follow it as it speeds, it is the path,
The golden ether on which flight is made,

More bird-like than of any earthly bird,
Up to the heaven where you and I shall dwell,
And find at last what we have sought in vain
Through many wasted hours; for everywhere,
Since I began to be, I have looked forth
And hoped to find the eyes which should be gates
Unto that permanent and noble realm;
You came; and, like a quickening potent thought,
I was at once the heart of the great life
Which I must henceforth lead. O dearest, come,
Refuse not love that is your purest self,
And is in me because you give it me.

FIORDIMONDA I pray you touch me not; I dream of love,
Whose hands are not mine own, whose life is part
Of actions moved by gracious powers on high?
What would you with the untutored peasant girl
Who for one instant crosses the high field
Where you have largest work to do, and then
Is gone like a wild bird with blossoms fair
Within its beak and a faint fragrance thrown
From its swift sudden flight? Let me remain
To finish what I have begun, and then
You may think of me as one who died mayhap
To make your peace more sure.

DUKE I have no peace
Whereof you are not the one midmost rose
Which is the light of all; earth's royalties

Are brittle glass that break within the breath
Of love as moonbeams in a shivering wave;
O hear what your own heart-beats tell you, hear,
O hear the voice of your own soul made plain
Through echoes of its music brought from me
By your sweet sorcery; fly not afield;
You are myself, and I adore the goodness
Which is your life of love and purity.

FIORDIMONDA I am a wave broken upon the rock,
A cloud dismembered by the mighty winds,
A star lost in the morning's potent fires;
Whither is hurled the frail bark of my hope
Swept by resistless currents to the deeps?
I would be helped from mine own self that is
My strongest foe, and whispers in mine ear
More tales than I have ever heard before.
I see the joy upon the mountain tops,
Moon-like it rises and it floods the night
And lures my footsteps forth; what can I here,
What voice calls through the splendor unto me?

DUKE It is the voice of love; from far it sounds
And you may not resist its gentle force;
My child, come, fold your wings and be at peace;
This is the god whose laughter rings the world
And fills the valleys with his wakening light,
The music which enthralls the rolling stars
And rises into flame with its own joy.
Follow the song and bring your thought in tune

With its glad motions; yet I speak but ill,
Your soul it is that thrills in all this glow
Of bliss and strength, your heart that wakes the birds
To answer with their supreme notes; I bear
The burden of the heat and day girt
In its white glory, and the summer comes
With wealth of blooms and odor-freighted gales
Upon my winter with no interval
Of languid spring. I hold you close to me,
Whatever clamors sound around our paradise,
And from our union yet may come the will
Which renovates the outer and restores
The old gladness unto men.

FIORDIMONDA What dream is this?
I am borne forward and an island glows
Upon the golden waters; see the blooms,
Purpling and tall, around the mystic shores,
And through the opening foliage on the sward
The dance of white-robed ones with out-spread arms
And gestures of allurement; now the sweep,
The leaping thrill of bliss, the impassioned thrust
Of all my being on the goal that shines
A temple white beneath the wind-kissed trees,
And you are there to welcome me; the song
That rises from deep grasses, burns in flowers
Turned sunward, breathes through all the air,
Bursts from the lips of those who minister

About the shrine, converts me to itself,
And I am as a wave upon the sea,
A ripple in the blossom-lighted bay
Which falls upon the smooth white sand in foam
And is at rest forever, yet not wave-like
I perish, but the wonder seizes me
Molten into its rush, and when I stand
Beside you, feel the flow of your dear breath
Upon my brow and hair, know the strange touch
Of your strong fingers, I am with you the soul
Of the great miracle.

DUKE We shall not part
Again though all the rage of all the earth
Foam toward us with mad lips of hate. You are
My wife, my spirit, brought to me from God,
Who works in ways mysterious; so, my sweet,
We shall tread paths of good that widen far
And bring the world into their reach.

FIORDIMONDA Ah me!
I am awakening from a strange delusion;
I see the wrong upon whose verge I stand;
I go no further; this is madness all;
Alas, what sudden anguish rives me through?
What bitter discord brings the singing's close?
Release me, for it may not be; I fare
Unto an alien destiny, forth upon
A quest far other; what have I to do
With these enchantments, who am vowed a maid,

Trusting the high commands? What brought me here
Into this blandishment? I must not yield,
But speed upon the deed that will not brook
Allegiance sundered, lost.

DUKE Help is there none
From my unswerving will; you are my love,
So close and deep the life, the heart of me,
That severance is to disobey the laws
Of Heaven and Joy.

FIORDIMONDA Rend me no more in twain:
I have been led, I know not how nor why,
Into forgetfulness of my great toil,
And of the dreams that I may not distrust.
I am at war with those intents; I fell
For one brief moment from the loyalty
That action claims; I pray you now forgive
The weakness which fulfils my heart with shame
And anguish: speak to me no more of aught
Which will make less the light of the clear sky.

DUKE Too late, Fiordimonda, my world's flower,
And strength of me, our life is but one web,
We breathe and fall together.

FIORDIMONDA No, no, no;
I have been wrong, you will not hold me fast,
I fear your power upon me, grant me peace
From the fierce pain.

DUKE It shall be pain foredone
And risen into a golden happiness.

FIORDIMONDA You do not spare me, give me not your aid
Towards freeing me. Say whither shall I turn?

DUKE Here to these arms that bend and yearn to you!

FIORDIMONDA O sainted ones, who gaze upon me now,
Divided in my soul between a love
That has shone on me with a sudden fire,
Which lights my inmost being and reveals
A wilderness of bliss, drawing me on
To penetrate its farthest deeps, and a love
That came to me as a high gift from you
To be the very pulse and inmost heat
Of all my life, and poured its overflows
In ministrations round the suffering world
And multitude of agonizing hearts,
Who moan within the darkness of a grief
Which lifts nor changes, O you thronèd powers,
Who have to shape and overrule the fate
Of this our star whereon we draw hard breath
Of fate uncertain, stretch your mighty hands
Unto me, lift me to your heights serene
As in the days that are but yesterday,
Yet seem remote as the beginning dim,
When I was rent not by the conflict dire,
And the great Spirit hid not his clear face!

Fill me once more with the unconquered strength
Which is above all battle, past the din
That troubles souls not touched nor kissed of you!
See, I grow whole again, you are not far,
You will not here abandon me when most
I need your friendship, you will make me sure,
And lead me where my wandering feet should tread!

DUKE Ay so; unto my palace mid the hills,
Where the noon nightingale sings in the shade,
And babble of the waterfall breathes low
The secret of the heart; far from the throats
Of the loud-clamoring multitude out there,
Who shall have all their uttermost desires,
The Frate in the Dukedom and the State
Led solely by mad priestcraft, what they will,
While you and I may hear nothing more of them,
And listen but unto our flowing thoughts,
Weaving around us joy and hope and bliss,
And making us akin unto the gods.

FIORDIMONDA I understand you not; I have come here
To finish what I have begun; these lures
At last are powerless.

DUKE Lures? I have no lures
Save the deep love that is even yours as mine.

FIORDIMONDA Pray tempt me not again; I am more calm,
And the pure light around me.

DUKE What you wish
I toil for, and whereso you are, I stand
There too: pardon, my love made me forget
The work we twain shall do together.

FIORDIMONDA Yes,
It shall be so.

DUKE And you will be my queen,
My golden one, my wife.

FIORDIMONDA The hour will show
What garlands shall engird our burning brows,
What destinies wait us in the distance there.

The Duchess enters in agitation.

DUCHESS The populace storm against the palace doors;
The fury rivals that of bursting waves
Which wildest winds drive to their deaths on rocks
Impending horrible; they call on you, my son,
And threaten much that is but dimly heard,
A something dreading its own uttered name
And cloaked in awful darkness; who can still
Them in their height of pain? I would not fly
Before ignoble fear, but yet I know not
What will disperse their rage.

DUKE Alfarabi
Shall front them; he shall tell them this from me;
I have found solace for the State and all;
Let them for a brief interval return

Unto their homes; it shall not be for long
That they shall feel their trouble; help is nigh;
Again with the sun's golden rising fair
I will be with them, and the tale I bring
Shall be such as their ears will thirst to hear,
And, having heard, will thirst again, again,
And yet again; mother, with you, and, wife,
With you beside me, we shall bring them peace,
And put to lasting flight the shadow grim
Who haunts our skies; I know the pathway well
Which you, my Fiordimonda, show to me,
And you and I shall victors be at last.

He stands with an assured expression between them, Fiordimonda has her arms crossed upon her breast, and the Duchess evinces both hope and joy.

The Curtain Falls.

ACT V.

The scene shows the public square as in the beginning of the play. The palace doors open, and Fiordimonda, accompanied by Liza and Pietro, appears on the steps. It is the early gray of the morning.

LIZA What freshness in the air! The stars are out
Upon the blue-gray sky, and the thin moon
Yet stays as if quite loth to leave her place
Of height and rule.

FIORDIMONDA Dear father, come,
We will walk through the garden one short turn
As you desired, for this unwonted life
Weighs heavily upon you and me.

LIZA Not far,
Rash child; we have thus stolen forth alone
To breathe and be, these deeply perfumed rooms
Appall me, and I long for the clear sky
And distant hills, which circle our quiet home;
We must return before they find us fled
From our rich prison; or perchance some one
Already may be stirring, and I feel
You should not see him now.

FIORDIMONDA I have no fear,

All my light-heartedness returned when you
Came to me, father dear; step slowly down,
The church is dark and silent, not a sound
Comes from the square save echoes of our voices.

LIZA The Frate dwells in yonder gloomy house,
Towering behind the gray cathedral's walls;
A light shines from a window; it is his,
I know it, for at the rare times when I
Have stood before the open church door there,
I have somehow gazed thitherwards and seen
His dark face glowering down upon the street
Always and strangely.

FIORDIMONDA He is a friend to men,
And ponders ever on their growing weal;
I would he chose to meet me, at his feet
I would receive his blessing, hear him say
"God's smile is on your labor; stay it not,
Forth to the end; our Faith is great in you."

PIETRO Why came I hither? I am very old,
And all this newness weighs upon me sore;
My child, what are not your bright eyes and hopes,
So weird, so solemn, answerable for?
I thought that I was through with life and might
Await the end in quiet at my door,
But now you drag me into these wild scenes,
And I look round bewildered. Well-a-day!
I hope it will not be for long.

FIORDIMONDA Soon, soon

We shall return together and my care
Will be to make you happy. This great morn
Sets the sure seal upon my act, or leaves
Me desolate and despairing. We will go
In either case back to our hills and know
These heats no further. Yet for me, alas,
I see but pain before me.

LIZA Dear, not so;
Youth is apt at recovery; then to-day
The Duke confronts the people?

FIORDIMONDA In a short hour;
What he proposes he has kept concealed,
But I shall not be left without the Voice
That whispers what is just to do.

PIETRO Hard task
To take upon oneself the things that are
Not ours, the moving of events, the work
Of very God. I tremble at the rash
And hasty eagerness which dares so much.

LIZA You have no visions; on our weakened eyes
The light strikes dimly, she is at home
In regions that we shall not see till Death
Shall put us there.

PIETRO I yielded to you both,
But I am fain to see you safely through
This rush and roar of deeds.

FIORDIMONDA Shall I behold
The grewsome apparition? for I seem
To change it when I gaze.

PIETRO Nay, it is nought;
Our Giosue thinks his fear was all he saw.

FIORDIMONDA He is with dear Susanna; they are well
And filled with their new happiness?

LIZA Brimmed up;
The father is a jovial, laughing man,
Rough with his travel, but kindly withal;
They make his new bought farm a place where all
May dwell together and the marriage day
Is not far off.

FIORDIMONDA Much joy be with them both,
But soon for me, when this day's flight is run,
Nought will remain except pale memories
Like faded flowers shut up within a book.
Father, you will not leave me?

PIETRO We both will be
A tax upon your care for many a day.

LIZA I hear a step, they come into the square.

FIORDIMONDA Be quick, we must not meet them at this time.

They ascend the palace steps rapidly, Pietro hobbling with his staff, and disappear within doors.

The square gradually fills with the populace; they come in many gesticulating groups; some of the women lead children by the hand, and others carry their babes in their arms; they all look eager, gaunt, and despairing. The men talk to each other in low tones, and their faces are suffused with an in-

flexible determination; a few of them assemble near the front of the stage, they are joined by women, angry and wild-eyed, who listen for a moment and then pass on. The whole multitude surges back and forth about the steps of the great Cathedral as if in momentary expectation of some one.

First Citizen He shall put us off no longer, we shall not be satisfied with the fair promises and doubtful smiles of the Arabian wonder-worker, who is plotting for his master some way of making an escape from the troubles closing around. The Frate has said that to-day will see the issue of our great conflict and his words have always been found true in the event that he has foretold.

Second Citizen I have not as unshaken a faith in the Frate's wisdom as you have; he has prayed in the church there day after day, but the horror in which we dwell has not been lessened. Why have not his appeals been answered? Why has not in response to his calls some angel appeared to drive from our skies the Death that seems to have fixed himself there forever?

First Woman You are too impatient. You must abide the time which has been appointed by the enthronèd powers above.

Second Citizen I have been waiting for some wretched days; twice my little one has thrown his chilling arms around my neck, and gazed at me with dimming eyes, that did not leave my face until the dulness of death came over them. I have longed

for the time which should bring us release and restoration. My wife and I are left childless and alone; how many days or hours or minutes may it be before we shall be parted, and one of us remain to walk his gloomy path in complete desolation?

SECOND WOMAN When the Duke appears this morning, let no one utter the word, peace; let the fire of wrath flame up in us all about him, that he will feel the heat of it rising toward him, and he will breathe the agony, as we have been doing for periods and times that have been as years. I turn to those palace steps behind which have been riot and song and wine, while we have sat foodless and fireless, wringing our hands and knowing not whither to look for aid. Let it all turn back and encircle him as it has been savage around us.

FIRST CITIZEN Be calm, dear friend; there is hope in the wise man, who has never failed us in our need. It is he who has forced the Duke to come to a decision to-day, and he has told us that he will not be bent from his purpose in the slightest any more.

THIRD CITIZEN Do you think that the Church is really on our side? Did not the messenger from Rome bring orders of silence to the Frate? How long may he speak freely, and give us courage to bear and wait, and fill us with the spirit which lives so fiercely in him? I look forward all the time to more

and stronger words from the Holy City, and, if the direst threats were to come, I should not be surprised.

First Citizen The Church will never desert her children who are obedient, and look to her for guidance with hearts pure and firm. Even if the Frate were for the moment required to give up his discourses, some other and better way would be found to help us.

Third Citizen We have been trodden under foot so long that we hardly know how to stand upright and act as men who have rights to maintain. The bondage has been on us and in us so deeply, we are not yet well able to see that all men are in justice dowered with all which is in the world, and the laws we make and the plans we devise are but so many means to bring about this result. The selfishness and the cruelty belonging to us in our childishness of growth and development lead weak and foolish men to grasp power and wealth and hold them for their exclusive behoof and benefit, not seeing life is enriched, the greater the multitude who possess all, and the shine of talents and nobility engirds each one the more glowingly in so far as the many are participants of them as heaven is brilliant with the innumerable stars.

First Woman I do not ask for gold or splendor, they may keep them, the lords and ladies who seem to think they are the wiser because they know the

names of their fathers and grandfathers for a short age backward; as if any one were ennobled by what he has not done or even seen; I ask but the privilege to be alive, and to be able to do, and to be granted the chance to think.

First Citizen The great Frate says that in the day whose beginning the new-risen sun will look upon, a beautiful friendship will pervade the seasons through which we pass and move; there will be no high nor low save as one stands before the people in the place of vantage for the greater service of all; there will be no clamor for possessions too large for any man to make available, for each will be assisted by all in the doing of that labor which he can the best so that at every point the most beautiful will be what is finished and achieved; no man will care to own what is for the higher blessedness of another, satisfied with those things which are truest for him, each will have his own, but it will be that which he loves the most because it serves others the most.

Second Citizen You are walking on the yielding waves or threading the manifold paths of the air; you are soothing yourselves with a passage through dreamland; you will awaken from it all, and find yourselves sinking into a lower abyss than we yet have reached.

First Citizen Say not so; the struggle of men

has been to bring about this wondrous end; they have wandered in devious ways and passed into thickets and jungles, where the light of the serene heavens was shut out by the thick overgrowth of leaves, and the hot air was congenial only to certain monsters who made their lairs amid the noxious greenery; but deep in the heart remains the inextinguishable impulse; with boldness and sureness the confinements have been overthrown, and the open road has shone again in the clear starlight or white in the mid-day radiance of the sun; in the freshness of the morning and the bitterness of the midnight vigil the races have girded themselves for the mighty advance, and the realm is attainable wherein the love of all will make permanent homes for each, and the source from which action flows will be the will to do the good. The day is coming when the struggle will no more be as to which is the first in vain pleasures or glittering pageants, but which is chief in the service that uplifts the weakest one to the heights where dwell the strong.

SECOND WOMAN God grant it be so! Have you heard of the new wonder come from the hills to aid the Duke in his extremity? Vague rumors have reached us of her as seeing visions and having dreams; it seems she has been led hither by the wizard Alfarabi, and will be at the bidding of the sinful powers who rule us.

THIRD WOMAN The saints hover about her sleep and bring to her lips words of a sweetness with which earth is unfamiliar. She is the pureness of thrice-sifted snows, and through her lucent soul the thoughts of heaven strive and flow without the soilure of the earth.

SECOND CITIZEN How learned you this?

THIRD WOMAN I am not long from the hills under which she dwells. I often saw her and her loveliness is nothing earthly. Her voice is as the wind amid the pines, and, if you listen to her, you can not other than believe what she utters.

FOURTH CITIZEN How came she with Alfarabi?

FIFTH CITIZEN We will have none of her. She has been tutored of the strange and wicked Arabian, and his arts it is that give her charm which is apt to allure and deceive. She has misled the simpler folk who dwell amid the fields, and he no doubt has visited her in secret, and she comes to work his wishes. She is a vain and dangerous sorceress, and we will drive her forth into the wilderness with the rulers who have brought on us fear and hate.

SECOND WOMAN She has no doubt easily learned the ways of sin and dark undoing that hold her under the flower-draped shadow of that marble house, whose whiteness is a lie and mockery.

FIRST CITIZEN We will not rashly judge her, but look on and hear what her new words may be. If

she is but another dark device of the great shame, which has so long sat in the highest places and brought on us such disaster and wild doom, we will not spare her though her youth is white with feigned purity and shows a loveliness that is not really hers. Should she, however, be in truth help sent mysteriously from the heavens unto us in our deepest grief, we will become as mere children to be led by gentleness and love unto an end that is more bright than we know fully.

THIRD WOMAN She stays in yonder palace only to bring them sure commands to do us right, and force them unto the justice which they are loth to accomplish; but see, the Frate with his fellows comes from the church and pauses there as if about to speak.

A VOICE Silence; the Fra Giacomo is waving his hand to quiet the tumult. Be still and hear the message.

FRA GIACOMO The wrath of the Lord has waited until this morning to pour itself forth from the open Heavens. The wickedness has grown into a mighty tree, under whose melancholy shadow the nation has sat as under a night that was full of terror and suffering. The axe is laid against the mighty trunk; the winds of destruction will blow, and the unpropitious growth will be hurled to the ground so that the true light may reach us, clear and unimpeded.

VOICES It shall be so! Vengeance has waited too long!

FRA GIACOMO We have uplifted many a prayer, and they shall all be answered. Though for a season we have seemed to be without the support of the angelic hosts, who have to guide and instrument this world whereon we stand, and the punishment has been upon us as though we alone were the guilty ones, yet has such abandonment been solely for a sign unto us that we have been weak of arm and slow of aim, yet has such sorrow been given us only the more fully to arouse us to the deed from which we have shuddered away, as too great for our hands, and too large for us to undertake.

VOICES Lead us, O Father; whither you point we will go; what you command we will do.

FRA GIACOMO Shall the vainglorious and the self-seeking forever gather unto themselves the splendor wherewith all mankind should be decked? Shall they continue to riot throughout the nights, which are unto them as the whiteness of days in summer, while the heavy sleep of weary despair holds those whose toilings have brought forth the lavish riches which are perforce yielded to the thoughtless and cruel ones? Shall their heads be wreathed with garlands, and their bodies reek with perfumes, while the eyes of the multitude, gaunt and hollow, look for bread and find it not?

VOICES Bread we find, but it is poisonous, and Death makes its sign upon it from the skies.

FRA GIACOMO It shall be thus no more; the bell this day shall toll over the passing away of the order of things which has in it nothing of help and sustenance; from the winds rising in the four quarters of the heavens comes the same sound of a new life, that makes green the barren spaces, and colors the sea with a radiance that is joy; victory speaks with an unfaltering tongue, and no man shall be far from the hearing of what his inmost soul yearns for; where has been division, shall be seen pure handed unity; where has been suffering, shall be found the peace which knows no ending; where the tears of the many have fallen to the ground, making it barren with the bitterness of human woe, shall be the soft rains that awaken the sleeping buds into vigor and delight; over us the free sky looking on hearts as wide-reaching as its blue light-filled dome, and on minds through which flows the unhindered swiftness of highest thoughts and hopes; the darkness has been pierced by many arrows, and Death shall feel the sharpness of his own darts penetrating his secret of being; I hear the chariot wheels of the coming time making a strange and hitherto unimagined music, as they roll up the steep hill of success and achievement.

VOICES What is this light that dazzles us? Is

the day surely beginning? Is yonder the long looked for dawn?

FRA GIACOMO Behold the mists arising from the city's spires and shining domes; amid her wide fields and beside her broad rivers she sits, serene and holy; into her streets throng the myriads from far over seas and from the distant lands; within her is justice enthroned and meting out wisdom to all and giving to each according to his height of doing; her soul is love that knows the subtlest beat of each heart and thrills with its smallest fervor; no man but calls her sovereign and is but herself in his every dream and act; no man but knows the world as his friend and brother, no man but sees in the life about him the noblest that stirs within him; heaven is opened above her, and the white-robed cohorts are visitors and helpers; faith is not dead but alive in every fibre; what each one needs, that he possesses, in the furtherance of toil for the welfare of the people; the vision of the Spirit, illumined, glorious, unending, shines as a sun amid the sun's effulgence; higher of worth than the miracles of doing is the will of man; highest of all is the freedom that flames into goodness, penetrates thoughts the divinest, lives in perpetual giving of itself to all men, rises through height upon height of all-embracing deeds to the centre, where glows the one Life which is Hope, Joy, God!

VOICES Victory is assured us! Our griefs are over! The misery is slain forever!

The sound of trumpets is heard in the distance.

FRA GIACOMO Fear nought, my children; earthly weapons are powerless in this conflict; it has been decreed on high that you shall be received into the gates that have been waiting for you. Let us descend and move on to the nearing fruition.

The great bell of the Cathedral begins to sound; the multitude divides, and the Frate, followed by a long line of monks, descends the steps, crosses the square, and with lifted crucifix halts before the palace. The music of the trumpets comes nearer and nearer; at length a squadron of soldiery appears and arranges itself on either side of the wide porch; the doors of the palace are thrown open, and the courtiers, ladies and gentlemen, throng the steps; in the middle of them stands the Duke with Fiordimonda and the Duchess on either side of him; behind Fiordimonda, who is robed in white, is Alfarabi, and with him appear Liza and Pietro; next to the Duchess and on the step just below her, Pepe, the jester, has stationed himself. Fra Giacomo presses forward and mounts a step or two, confronting the Duke, who looks down upon him graciously and with smiling eyes.

DUKE With the fair coming of another day,
O gentle friends, we are met to build anew
The commonweal which has lain low of late,
Smitten of dire disease and ailing sore
In brain and limb, and overwatched of powers
Cruel and sinister; I join with you

To put unto the lip whatso will bring
Color into the face we love so well,
Strength to the hands which have upheld
What we have thought the dearest; now no more
Shall aught have power to bend our subject wills
From giving her what yet she may demand;
The crown I bear of right since the dim years
Gave it unto my father's keeping, what is mine
Closest and most desirable, I hold
Of lesser worth than one small instant's breath
Of her great being; all I am prepared
To yield if so she ask it, but I stand
Her chief defender, and the hand that strikes,
The voice that makes inroad on her pure life,
I will oppose with all my strength.
Speak then what is the right, but keep afar
Mad fancies bred of unrestrainèd grief,
And dreams which fly too high above our earth.

FRA GIACOMO Great Duke, I am this people's mouthpiece, weak
I know, and not so wisdom's darling child
That without cloud of error reigns the day
Within my patient soul; but I have seen
The growth of suffering through which our lives
Have lain in a dull night, that gave no leave
For aught to burst and bloom, and I have sought
Means for its sure removal, which I am bold
Once more to urge upon your ear.

PEPE It is I
Who bid you hither; know I am the one
Who ever drew my breath within the sheer
And utter opposite; therefore what is
Has never been commendable to me,
But your white black, and all your sombre white,
Your love my hatred, and your wondrous shows
My simple scorn; I have been smiles to all
Whom you have bound within your stringent glooms,
I have been friend where you have stood at watch
To guard your own that was not yours at all
Save owned by other; nay, I say, who seeks
The truth needs must abide with me.

ALFARABI Fool's height
Of thought and insight; in a crooked world
A surer clue from the enwoven wood
Wherein we wander lost than most men deem.

DUKE I lay this charge upon you, lady dear,
To have such conference with the noble priest
As will resolve you both how best to bring
Safety and peace unto the people; I
Lay no more claim upon your thought and will
Than does comport with such love as you bear
Me and my mother here.

FIORDIMONDA O guardian saints,
Who sent me forth unto this hour's great act,
Which makes or mars a nation's destiny,
Live in my soul and penetrate my thought

With your high selves, that I may rightly deal
Justice and Truth to all.

ALFARABI Hand on the helm!
You steer us through the dangerous way
Unto the open waters glittering there.

PEPE Make the realm nought and your own soul the source
Of what is sure to be.

PIETRO O child, may Heaven
Desert you not at the sharp turn of need!

LIZA What doubts are here? The Holy Mother sits
Mistress of all her words within the deeps
Of her illumined spirit!

FIORDIMONDA My lord, you grant
Unto a weak and stranger girl the touch
Upon high fate that should be yours alone?

DUKE I place my throne into your keeping, give
All that I am for you to fashion right.

DUCHESS I set the seal upon his deed; I too
Put the decision in your heaven-sent will.

FIORDIMONDA I am prepared to take this charge and work;
I know the cause, and its renewal due
Has been not mine alone; I shall have aid
Of hopes larger than mine own knowledge vague,
And the event that has been long decreed
Falls from my lips; not from myself shall come

The utterance which allays the bitter storm
That has too long dismayed us; trust me here,
I am a frail but certain instrument
Of purposes which are the force whence Time
Receives its form and garb, and the great Change
Proceeds that has beginning now; and you,
O worthy father, strike your hand in ours,
The better to compel rich furtherance!

FRA GIACOMO This made no part of the great dream I had;
A child, come from the pleasant outer fields,
Devise the means to heal our deathly ills?
What mad fantastic whim shows thus its face
Of ill-timed mockery, what court play and jest
Throws scorn upon our sorrow, hurls us back
Into the chasm from which we hoped escape?

ALFARABI Clearer of sight is the untainted soul
Than sombre meditation lost within
The maze of its vain subtleties.

VOICES Hear her;
She is a prophetess divinely sent
To be our helper strong, miraculous.

FRA GIACOMO (*Turning to the people*) Will you too leave within her voice
The outcome of your longings and the cure
Of your great griefs and pains?

VOICES Ay! Ay! Ay! Ay!
Let the white maiden speak for us as them!

FIORDIMONDA Lo! I am one of you; I know your fears,
Your bitter fears, your sore defeats, your toils
That have been without issue save to make
Power upon you sterner and more sure.
I come to you as healer, as a friend
Who bear in mine own person all your ills,
And suffer for you, and arise therefrom
Victorious with the help of Her who is
Ever beside you with a mother's love
And yearning, I am here to bring you calm
And noble life past all you knew before.

VOICES Act for us at the turning-point of Time;
We do believe in you; you will achieve
What we have burned for all this weary while.

FRA GIACOMO I am the servant of these voices; I must bend
Unto their will expressed; I turn to you
As oracle and might.

DUKE The fate of all
Hangs on her gentle speech.

PEPE I am content;
The world is wholly silenced at the last;
Learning is past into the outer gloom,
And the pure thought of the Time-virgin soul
Is heard in the unvapored air.

PIETRO It was not for nought

She heard the torrents fall from their wild heights,
And knew that every wind from the clear sky
Murmured of mysteries fraught with highest
Heaven.

LIZA O child, I never doubted your pure dreams!

FRA GIACOMO First we demand a complete change
of rule;
There is nor high nor low in perfect Freedom,
Each blossomed into all he may become,
And girt by the same universe that is
His adjuvant, and each as master holds
Equal prerogative with each, and gives
In his own place his due submissiveness
And help unto the rich uplift of all;
Each voice is therefore needed in the song,
Which is the state's best life and utterance.

FIORDIMONDA The fair republic rises with your
words,
And builds itself strong block on well hewn block
Into large home where all men dwell secure;
What is of regimen shall pass away,
And your desire be nobler than itself.

FRA GIACOMO No secret council of mere gilded
ones,
Unlearned in any arts of war or peace,
And great but with their father's old renown,
Shall waste deliberation's solemn hour

In futile nothings; from the governed ones
Shall rise in process due the governors.

FIORDIMONDA The people must be trusted; faith in them
Breeds nobleness and high attempt; too long
The heart within them has lain idle; now
We call on them for guidance, and the glow
That shines within their eyes is safest light
Whereby to guide our footsteps; it shall be!

A COURTIER What place may have our old nobility?
We are not all given over to vain whims
And foolish pleasure; in our souls abides
As deep a love of country, nor unskilled
Are our best leaders in the task of rule.
Shall we stand here, and see this power torn forth
Of our unweakened hands, and ignorance,
Wild with its wrongs as it considers them,
Thrust on a toil it cannot dare assume
Without the certain ruin that attends
Such mad attempts? Stand forth, good friends, I call
For better wisdom, safer lore.

FIORDIMONDA Peace, peace;
Sheathe your vain sword, it would avail not now;
The wise and noble are the mid of power,
And shall be most our rulers; they shall be
The topmost counsellors of one who holds

The reins of State; but rank nor wealth nor pomp
Have further meaning save as deeds are done
That are divine and noble; wisdom's blood
Flows through the realm and gives it life and form
And moulds it to an image of high God!

FRA GIACOMO Further devices must be found to cure
The curse of useless plenty in the grasp
Of one, while many lack for bread or drink
And struggle through dark days of pain and woe.
The rugged bodies are but images
Of worse defects within; the twisted limbs
And blearèd eyes figure the gnarled soul,
That sits cramped in its might and blinded half
From the just sight of God and Man. No toil
Shall slay what all the toilers seek in anguish,
Nor life so far forget itself as heap
Its great rewards in one bewildering mound
Which but a few possess for their delight
And mad caprice of usance.

FIORDIMONDA It shall be!
Not by a sudden stroke which breaks and mars
What it would fain preserve from touch of harm,
But such sure means as bring in their good time
The wished for without rage or needless pain.
No man who loves his neighbor may withhold
What he can use not, but that other thrills
With hope to have because of widening deed

His heart feels deepmost; shamelessness to own
What brings not bread to men or lights the way
To great achievement; nought but must reveal
Itself in living service, caught within
The ceaseless stream of just beneficence,
Which is like air or light, glad sustenance
Unto our wakening weal.

VOICES: O Death,
We now can fight you, and we fear you not!

ALFARABI The day begins in gold!

DUCHESS See
yonder sky,
Such flood of glory red is past belief!

During the scene from the appearance of Fiordimonda the heavens have been filling with a sunrise, brilliant and miraculous; the sky is now a blaze of pulsating color.

FRA GIACOMO What mighty head shall wear the civic crown,
Supreme in token of the unity
That holds the nation?

FIORDIMONDA The gracious hearts in turn
Who will the best because they know it best!

DUKE I have withheld my voice, but here I claim
The privilege which has not left me all.
I yet am Duke of this good realm, and yield
Mine old prerogative to one alone.

DUCHESS I know your wish; and, O good people there,

I lay my hand in solemn blessing on
The golden head my son will name to you.

DUKE Deem not that I would grasp one shred of rule
From her who stands beside me, I am done
With all regalities, and gladly give
What never made me joyance; but my love
That clings unto her will abate no part
Of its belongings; I am wholly hers,
And no one shall divide me from that heaven;
Here I am master, and my yea and nay
Governs the seasons; lo! she is my wife,
My love, the lady Fiordimonda, Duchess
Of Modena, and mistress of you all,
Your own elect, until she duly lays
That rule aside for you to choose again.

FRA GIACOMO Would you hurl back the rising rectitude
Into the dark once more? We hold it best
You lay no hand upon the helm; we grant
You peace and blest retirement; pass from hence
Into your privacy, where your great joys
Will shine in their own splendors, undisturbed
By glooms the toiling world would throw perchance
Across them; you shall have the thwarted wish
Of many years.

ALFARABI The past uprears its might,
Shadowy but strong, within your reborn State;

You build not on the vacant nothingness,
But all the good achieved in all the days;
The Duke remains part of your commonweal,
Not so in virtue of his birth, but sign
Chosen by you of that abiding strength
Which comes of union with the rich results
Of manhood since the birth of fleeting hours.

FIORDIMONDA He is my husband and he stands by me.

DUKE I see the vision of the nobler state
Even as you; were I indeed the serf
Of my own lusts as you so far misdeem me,
Yet would the glory of that city pure
Enthrall me unto farthest sacrifice;
But I have freed me from the stress of youth
That forced me into ways not wholly loved,
And offer here my soul, my life, my all
To the great building of the streets and towers
Whose stones are lucent with the light of God;
I pass into the placid solitude
Of the near hills, and touch your deed no more
Than by such simple ways as any man
May use in helpfulness; but of my love
I am the master, and my ruler wife
Fashions your will as mine in act and right.

While the Duke is speaking, the apparition appears, dark and lowering, in the very centre of the illuminated sky. A moan is heard from the Assembly, but the Frate silences them by an uplift of the hand.

PIETRO Is that their fear? My heart is free and bold!

LIZA Look yonder, child, uplift your gaze and drive
The horror forth!

DUCHESS Her eyes are sure of aim!

PEPE Now shall we learn the inner of the outer,
The secret of the other; here it is
And falters not; now she will show us it
As it must be; when Death is all there is,
Then there is no more Death.

FIORDIMONDA What is your fear?
Think you the gloom dwells yonder in the skies?
Have you not learned the potent exorcism
Which turns its dark to light? Have you not come
To battle here and win? Look toward it well;
What see you but yourselves unmoulded yet
Into the nobility which shall control
All mere destructiveness, and bid it serve
The beauty which you seek? Turn not away,
This is the height of Joy and Victory.

FRA GIACOMO The fury seizes me; I prophesy;
I see the dome uprising and the sun
Glitters upon its gold; unto the doors
The Nations throng, and with convergent forms
Worship in various chapels the One God.
There is no more exclusion, all may come

Unto the altar where the Holy Flame
Flickers or faints not through the passing hours;
The music rises of the universe,
The chorus of all peoples singing praise;
The Spirit Everlasting, the Golden One,
Fills the wide aisles and thrills in every soul;
This is the dream which has been in my sight
Through all my waiting, this the Wondrous Church
Which I have seen descending from on high.
Our Father yonder on his Seven Hills
Has sanctioned the great vision; lo! there comes
The resurrection of the noble dead,
The wisdom of the greatness yet unborn,
The unanimity of all gracious souls,
The fane of precious stones and purest light,
Repentance, Goodness, undecaying Life,
The presence of the Holy everywhere!

ALFARABI My horoscope presages Liberty;
Truth shows herself in her own simple garb,
And builds herself into the life of all
By her own splendor; nought may bind or fetter,
Her breath is as the soul of many souls
Fashioning the everlasting; Freedom shines
The very sun of spirit; worlds on worlds
Revolve within the current moving fair
By strength of her high will; her circle curves
Around the whole, the ever-fluctuant rim

Of self-moved actions; lo! her Truth in man
Weds truth that has not had beginning, Truth
That knows not ending, being very life
Of life, and pulse within each changing pulse,
The All in One in whom division serves
But the white glow of His own purity.

FIORDIMONDA My husband, you shall help me and shall guide!

DUKE I am your servant still and your great toil's.

FIORDIMONDA What Death may be when Love makes love to Death?

When in the shadow Love uplifts his torch,
And stays the darkness? When grim vice and shame
Behold themselves in Love's transforming light
And know their horror? When division feels
How at the feet of Love it gladly lies
And melts into a nobler passion? When each heart
Hears its strange solitude grow alive with sounds
Of Love's own music, and with golden bands
Is joined unto Love's regnance? When free Life
Shows Love at its own centre, and each soul
Is the all of Love that is the all in all?

While she speaks, the apparition is slowly transfigured; it becomes a form of exceeding light in a glory of light; through the splendor around it appear circles on circles of luminous figures, filling the sky and merging in an ineffable radiance in the zenith. The personages except Fiordimonda fall on their knees; she stands gazing fixed and immovable.

DEATH Servant of God I am, I do his will,
I am a lesser light within his light,
I am a Love obedient to his Love.

CHORUS MYSTICUS.

What you have longed for, hoped for, toiled for, here you behold it,
Deep in your hearts forever Wisdom has sung and has told it,
Sorrow and gloom are but paths to an endless Delight and Decision,
Steps to the glittering summit, the City of Life and of Vision,
Into the glow press onward, Heaven's own music around you,
Luring to triumphs, the chainless chains wherewith Love has bound you!

The Curtain Falls.

EPILOGUE

THE EPILOGUE.

The scene and the characters are the same as in the Prologue. The time is the morning after the play.

ROBERT It is, indeed, a strange and wondrous mystery you have woven in an age that loves rather the clear and simple, dear mother. You must have rare confidence in the sureness of your art, since you are willing to place this living flower, born and belonging in a remote past, and requiring those warmer and softer winds for its due sustenance, amid the dry and arid and attenuated atmosphere of to-day. What are we to make of your tender and yet heroic Fiordimonda, who sees angels, and these have been proven not to be at all, who believes and is upheld by the divine and immaculate Mother, and she has been shown, together with her son, to be nothing more than a fantastic mode of thought, which belongs to a crude and less developed period in the progress of the race? Mediævalism lingers like a half-exorcised ghost in certain twilight sections of the modern life, in the dim religious light of a worship whose full transformation into a monotone of liberalism is at hand; as a living and elevating force it has been fully superseded by energies which science can weigh or measure; Art cares nothing for

it save as a mode of expression, a means of giving vagueness and depth of color and shadowyness to its creations; but you really seem to have persuaded yourself into a belief that there is yet something in it, that we have not exhausted it, and may get from it food and drink that are healing and refreshing.

EDITH You are not even half serious in what you are saying, Robert. When you assume a languid solemnity of countenance, and a subdued richness of tone, we know very well that you are hiding thoughts which you appear to me sometimes afraid to express; besides I can see from the faint fatigue in your eyelids that you have been touched beyond your wont by the scenes which have moved before us.

MRS. HERBERT The story of the world has in large measure been told; the past in its strength and its weakness has been made known; its struggles, its failures, its glories, are revealed as at no time before. We understand it better than the men and women who performed their parts, great or small, upon their narrow stage. Why we should not be permitted to select from the garden any flowers but the latest fancies of the gardener, why we should be forced to make our nosegays only of the soberer-hued and fainter-perfumed blossoms, is a secret which not any subtle explanations and persistent pleadings have served to unravel. Now that the past has become as real as the present, we are assuredly

authorized to extend the dominion of art over all spaces of the earth and all periods of history.

EDMUND Yet why not remain in the days we know best, and engage in the settlement of the questions vital to us now? I hope you will not think I am going over to the enemy, yet every age, I think, ought to devote its highest and noblest energies to the special work it has undertaken, and not allow an agency so potent and fascinating as its art to reproduce dimly what has previously been represented boldly and brilliantly.

MRS. HERBERT The era has arrived when the present is not alive alone; the whole of history has been touched by the enchanter's finger, and nation by nation rises again into palpitant strength and vigor; moreover on our eyes there emerges a deeper life enclosing the national individuals in its scope and medium; they are but elements in a reality that has been the breath of their being at every moment, and has used them as its instruments of development and manifestation; the entire orb of History has risen into our knowledge, and the artist may take as his province any domain, provided he remain true to the spirit pervading the whole.

EDITH I am a little surprised at Edmund's words; he has not been severely siezed of the prevalent malady; I will talk to him to-morrow, and remove the last traces of the disorder. The artist

suffers, however, with the rest of mankind; a strange eclipse has come over the sun in our experiences; nay, it is more correct to say a blindness has taken possession of us, an obtuseness of our spiritual powers has us in its clutches; we believe no more than we can see; we remain in the circle of our immediate possessions and actions; when we shall be freed from our strange and persistent paralysis, when the weakness of our faith in the spiritual will have been filled with a new fervor of health, we shall not have so much to say about an artist's material, and have more to do with his idea and inspiration.

ROBERT The world is indeed one; the vision of mankind rises above the limits of space and time, and beholds a unity in which these latter are but vanishing elements; Art, filled with the splendor of the dream, which must be reality, for reality is but a part of it, has a function far transcending that of the delineation of the small passions and eager competitions of the daily life; and it must forever reserve the right of selecting its period and characterization to enable it freely to unfold the depths into which it penetrates. I have been travelling onward to such convictions for a long time; the evolutionary process of which we make so much, and probably justly, is but a phase of the totality, whose substance is not the Unknowable, but the Eternal and Vital, the Organism of Ideas, inclusive of the

processes of change and development, which Plato found and gave as a heritage to subsequent ages. Your play, mother, will be to me an awakening that I have felt was near, and it comes from the source of all the gifts which are best and noblest. I yield myself to the charm of your creations as far as I can, but I find my wings inadequate to the flights you take so easily. I have turned to your beautiful visions far more ardently than you have supposed, but have always found my way barred by inaccessible rocks and ravines, and seen beyond only an assemblage of vapors and crags. I have taken refuge in a cynicism, which is only a form of dissatisfaction, and submitted to the despondency evoked by my failure. The land you dream of is only resident in your dreams, and the harsh and cruel reality confronts us with more rugged opposition, when we approach it again after a sojourn in the world of our imaginations. Let us be patient with what we find; let us be gentle with whatever awaits us; let us give no unnecessary wounds; let us trust all may become more tender and loving; but at best, I am afraid, the real can be but stern, the life we lead but a gradual confession of its inherent and unchangeable sorrow.

EDMUND You seem to admit that the sadness of life lessens with the advancing ages; one may believe, therefore, it is not essential, but ultimately may wholly and permanently disappear.

MRS. HERBERT The reign of justice, whose soul is mercy, will surely come; the wrongs, still darkening the time, will seek their homes in the abyss from which they have crept; what need of inequalities in the region of material wants and necessities? What insolence in the assumption of hereditary preeminence! What folly in pride based on the possession of qualities wholly the gift of another! The vigor of life belongs in the spiritual sphere; there emulation means the ownership of what, when imparted to another, enriches the giver; there no height is worth ascending unless another occupies it with us; there division means enlargement, and the strife is not to hold and to have, but to distribute and disseminate. When the love of mankind shall have permeated the race's every activity, and the folly of the selfish ownership of good and beautiful things shall be apparent, the fervor of competition will confine itself to the realm where the highest place is granted to him who gives the most.

ROBERT You are your own Fiordimonda, dear mother, and you transfer her prophecies to the world of inflexible laws and sequences. She seemed to have no doubt of the validity of her mission, and the lofty source from which her dreams poured into her; but can we be so sure amid the complicated and ever-changing shows around us?

EDITH There are arguments which are unan-

swerable; there are truths which are their own evidence; there are certainties which are absolute; we may not express ourselves in the language of Fiordimonda, but we know when we have been penetrated and encircled by a thought that is the very eternity and security of the universe itself; without which there would be only primeval night and chaos; which we must utter and make public and divulge; which is potent to transform and competent to establish.

ROBERT I admit it with all my heart, I believe it, now that you are around me, and in the hearing of your voices, but I shall forget and the gloom will return.

EDMUND The sun exists since it shines through the clouds; we know that the very night itself derives what light it has from him.

ROBERT At least we are sure we have had insights, and we may trust them; if we cannot believe our minds when their utmost ardor gives strength and passion to all their powers, we have less reason to repose confidence in the uncertain glimpses belonging to our lighter experiences. I have found the skies blue at intervals, I have met and conversed with wisdom at rare and transcendent times; I have beheld in the play the peace and harmony which will indeed be good-will itself resident on earth as in heaven. I will learn to recur to the moments when

I am freed from the benumbing languor leaving me at the mercy of my darkest fancies, and through such recollection find the surest weapon against the prevalence of the malign possession.

MRS. HERBERT The way is long and the difficulties many. Which of us has not his hours of darkness and his moments of sharp apprehension, when his highest hope appears to abandon him, and his deepest thought to be lost to him? Climbing, however, gives strength; the upper air becomes healthier to breathe; the clouds are left below, and the undimmed sun shines. The heart of man feels itself akin to all that is or may be; it lies ever bathed in the sweep of the manifold currents; thought alarms with the false creation of a separation that is not final; life moves to a unity complete and transparent; with faith as a guide, and love to uphold and cheer, the end of the journey is already glowing before us, the joy springing from the blessedness of all men, the wisdom belonging to the knowledge which is the labor of all men, the energy which wells from the beneficent activity of all men, the heaven of desire, the reality of search, the completion of the work whose secret, whose movement, whose termination is assuredly divine.

THE END.

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